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by Irwin Shaw

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by John Farrar

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by Lillian Smith

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by Walter Karig
Reviewed by Harrison Smith

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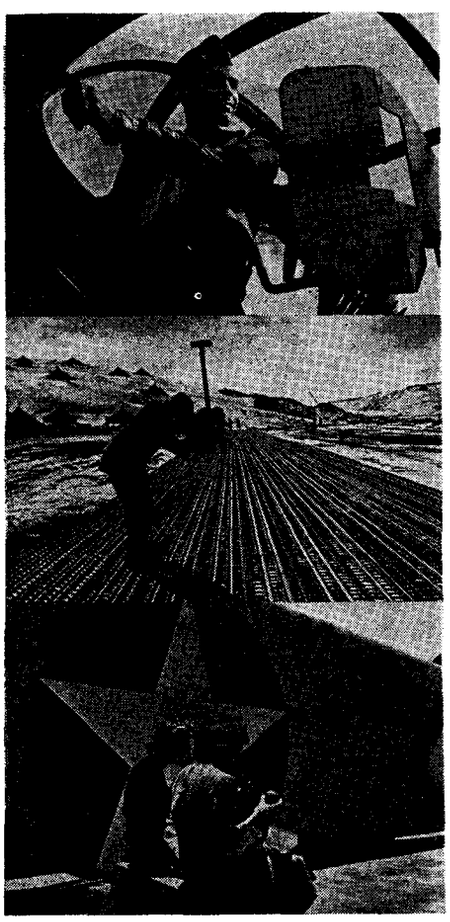
What makes a good book title?

LAST month a Holt book appeared which has, at first glance, a pretty meaningless label. NO TUMULT, NO SHOUTING doesn't give you any notion of what the book might be about, and it has a way of slipping through the cracks in anybody's memory. The idea of the book grew up in our office about two years ago when one of us saw a manuscript Lieutenant Commander Don Thorburn brought back from the Aleutians. He had written about the Navy's patrol squadron, Patwing 4, and its defense of the islands against the Japanese. Everyone was caught by the extraordinary story that shone through the pages; of how a handful of men with a few Catalina Patrol Boats—a plane that was built for observation only, a plane that had more than once been declared obsolete—had staved off the opening wedge of an invasion of the North American continent by the Japanese.

Sometimes an account of a small segment of one campaign, unrelated to the rest of the war, can make war's reality more vivid than an over-all view. And in these informal notes, many of them written on the spot, we could see that quality. We were excited by the story and by the spirit of the gallant, durable PBY, and how this lumbering patrol plane had dive-bombed and outfought lightning-fast Zeros in the icy, foggy skies of the Aleutians. Then too, Lieutenant Commander Thorburn brought us some superb photographs taken in the islands by Lt. Horace Bristol, USNR, who before the war had been a well-known San Francisco photographer. And before Thorburn left for duty again he said he liked the title NO TUMULT, NO SHOUTING, but perhaps we could think of a better one. We said we would try. So, we had a short but compelling manuscript temporarily called NO TUMULT, NO SHOUTING, some unusually fine photographs, and an editorial staff with a great admiration and love for the PBY.



Then one day the author's wife, Mrs. Thorburn, who is also L.L. of *The New Yorker* staff, came in with some more pictures. In talking about the story and the PBY someone spoke of the people behind the planes. Not the naval officers who flew her but the men and women in San Diego who built the PBY. And someone else spoke of the pride these people took in the exploits of the big Catalina Patrol Boats, for they are built not by assembly line, but piece by piece like a ship.

Out of that conversation came the idea which resulted in the final book. For Lois Thorburn took the next plane to San Diego. There she prowled around the big Consolidated Vultee plant and talked to nearly everyone who had a hand in making the Big Cats. She came back with several short pieces about the people, from young Navy wives recently turned welders to craft-proud foremen who had worked on the first PBY's. And, too, she brought some wonderful photographs, many of them by Commander Edward Steichen.

Then the title trouble began in earnest. How to express what this great plane meant to the home front and the war front? The PBY has dozens of affectionate, and some not so affectionate, names. We tried *The Flying Coffin*—too gruesome. *The Deadly Duckling*—it might be a Walt Disney movie. *The Flying Plowshare*—too far-fetched. None of them, we admit, were very good, nor did they suggest the true story of the book; that it was both about the people who built the plane and the men who flew her. In the end we let the title go by default. (Besides the authors liked NO TUMULT, NO SHOUTING.)

Maybe the fact that this book is so different was the cause of our mental paralysis about the title. Unpretentious though the book is—only the chronicle of a few men fighting with too little equipment, and some other people in San Diego who saw the PBY's they made do the almost impossible—it's a brave little book, and in the very smallness of its scope it tells quite clearly how we have spent these war years. A bad "selling" title, but those who read the book rather like it, after all.

No Tumult, No Shouting

THE STORY OF THE PBY

by Lois and Don Thorburn

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, $2.50

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The Saturday Review of Literature

If You Write About the War

IRWIN SHAW

I FEEL very sorry for writers these days. I feel sorriest for writers who are not in the Army and have not seen the war. Then I feel just a little less sorry for writers who are in the Army and *have* seen the war. The writers, especially the young ones, who have not seen the war, have been deprived of an experience that is at the same time the most moving and significant and most common of their generation. From now on, they can only know, uneasily and by hearsay, a section of history with which they will have to deal for an audience of experts for years and years to come.

Writers in the Army, on the other hand, while being dragged daily through the richest and most varied material any writer could hope for, stand a chance of being killed, or maimed in mind or body, by shell, boredom, or sergeants. Also, while the long years of the war roll on, the writers in uniform see themselves rusting a little in their military position, while the journalists who seem to be only a little less numerous than infantrymen, cover all but the deepest and most important aspects of the war.

I speak about writing about this war from rather a special vantage point. I have been kept too busy either to read or write very much about the war, so that my opinions on the subject are bound to be somewhat abstract and arbitrary.

I regret not having been able to do more reading during these years, but secretly I am grateful to the War Department for the hours it has kept me away from the typewriter. Being involved in the war, it is impossible to write about anything else. But being involved in the war means that all is confusion and alarm, dust and turmoil. To digest this enormous glory and catastrophe while still being fixed in the middle of it is a task from which a writer may well fall back in despair.

A journalist can attempt it. A short-story writer can make sorties against shrewdly limited portions of the objective. Even a playwright, working

Irwin Shaw: "The art of writing, like the art of surgery, profits from war."

within the blessed, harsh limitations of the stage, might have some local successes. But the novelist, faced with the broad, pitiless canvas, has my sympathy.

I suspect novels about the war. I feel that they either have been written by men who have seen a great deal, and, in despair at ever being able to digest what they have seen, throw a raw, unformed lump between covers; or they have been written by men who have seen nothing, and, having nothing to digest, get out a neat, orderly, empty book.

Not long ago, in a discussion of the only novel written by a soldier that I have read, Harry Brown's "A Walk in the Sun," the division of opinion was very sharp. People who had seen no fighting were deeply impressed with it, and got from it a sense of reality, a sense that this is what fighting is like, this is the way soldiers are, this is the way Americans behave in battle. But to the men who had been in action, the novel, although graceful and interesting and amusing, seemed unreal and inconclusive. Pvt. Brown, who wrote the novel before he had seen battle, had been lured into the trap of the prestige of Crane's "The Red Badge Of Courage," to which the publishers of Brown's novel rather unwisely compared it. Crane had never heard the guns when he wrote his novel and that fact has probably launched an unfortunate number of war novels notable more for the audacity of their authors than for the accuracy of their effects.

There are aggravating technical errors in Brown's book. A platoon goes into action, and an invasion at that, inexplicably unbriefed, with the objective, the plan of attack, and the means of maintaining communication with the rest of the company known only to the lieutenant in command, who is promptly killed. There is a vague and unexplained lack of connection between the platoon and the rest of the army and the rest of the war for the entire length of the book. Aside from these and other errors, the men who had seen action found other and graver faults with the book. Combat may not have meant the same thing to each of them, but to all of them it meant something entirely different from "A Walk in the Sun." The conversations in the Brown book, all written in a brisk, comical, Hemingway-derived style, are of a curious falseness. Giving Brown a certain ordinary license of stylization, this is how soldiers do talk . . . but not in battle. The griping, the unrelenting wisecrack, the city-street and barroom humor all sound like the jottings of a clever and perceptive writer who has listened in barrack and messhall and even on maneuvers, and slyly transposed his jottings into the mouths of characters whom he has arbitrarily put into battle.

WHEN men are in action their conversation is terribly functional. They are interested in saving their lives and depriving the enemy of his, and they have no time to amuse either themselves or their friends with bright, posed observations. Even when they are making a joke, their jokes are functional. The one joke that sticks in my mind that I heard under battle conditions came at a regimental Command Post outside Saint Malo during the siege of that port last summer. We were suddenly brought under a

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concentration of heavy artillery fire and during a lull in the firing, a jeep driver, an old Army man, called Cleveland, stuck his head up from the hole where he had taken cover, and said, "Let's get out of here. Those shells're coming over and do you know what they're calling? They're calling, *Cleveeee . . . Cleveeeee. . . .*" It was a joke, but it had a definite function . . . . to get Cleveland out of there before the next batch of shells came over.

Everyone going up into the line notices how quiet everything gets as you approach the firing. The noise of the guns increases but the essential sound level falls off, as people listen, carefully, with a strained, abstracted air, to the approaching shell, the whine of the sniper's bullet, the distant sound of anti-aircraft fire which will give you time to find cover before the strafing plane comes over. In the tense hush and acute, all-pervading discomfort, mental and physical, all excess conversation is frowned upon, as representing a needless danger. Brown's platoon gives the impression of talking its way into Italy.

John Hersey, author of "A Bell for Adano," has written very well about fighting, from first-hand experience as a journalist. But when it came to writing a novel, he wrote about an area and a problem well behind the lines. He is not a soldier, of course, but it is impossible to draw a sharp, pure line in matters like these between the military typewriter-carriers and their brothers who serve Luce. Hersey, too, did a brave thing, but too quickly. He was trying to show us, in the middle of the stink and horror, what we are fighting for, and how we sometimes achieve it. He serves his country well, but his Muse not quite well enough. He grapples heroically with the sorrowful truism about the American Army that the closer it comes to the fighting the less it seems to be concerned with what the fighting is about. Major Joppolo knows what the fighting is about and is not loath to talk about it and act on it in a manner which makes us proud he is wearing our uniform. But somehow the Italian population of the novel never achieve the reality of the MP sergeants and the ex-Yale boys; somewhere in the over-simple style with its hint of a Biblical influence that too many of us affect when writing about foreigners whom we do not really know well enough, somewhere the deadly sin of cuteness has crept in and the tragic and broken heirs of Mussolini's Italy have been made smaller than life.

"A Bell for Adano" is more a promissory note on a rich future, scribbled hastily, under stress, by an honest man, than the full payment of a current debt to our native literature.

Judging novels about the war is about as confusing as writing them. John Steinbeck's "The Moon Is Down," which was widely criticized as erring on the side of leniency to the Nazis, was the one American novel smuggled into occupied France and translated and printed at the risk of death by the printers and publishers of the French Underground. After seeing what the Germans had done to France I was more than ever convinced that Steinbeck had erred, but there is no escaping the stubborn fact that the men who day by day lived with the Nazis at their throats thought that "The Moon is Down" was worth the risk of the executioners' rifles.

The most satisfactory novel I've read about the war was written by an old hand at the job, C. S. Forester. His picture of a British cruiser, *H.M.S. Penelope,* called *The Pepperpot* in grim remembrance of her scars, and later lost in the Mediterranean, is a clear, persuasive account, not only of what it was like to fight in the Mediterranean, but of what the British sailor and the British people are like, and what the enemy was like on the searoad to Malta. Forester sailed on the *Penelope* and *learned* it. Hull and guns, officers and other ranks, engines and techniques, from the movement of the turrets to the sale of chocolate and cigarettes in lulls between broadsides, nothing was left unexamined, so that the final result was that unremitting interplay of man and machine which is war today.

But even so, just before the *Penelope* went down, when a young lieutenant on it was questioned about his reaction to the book, he shrugged and said, "It's all right. But it's too glamorous."

Perhaps there is no answer to that. Perhaps the man who has been there will always say, "Well, that isn't exactly the way it was." When the great books are written, I suppose they will be the ones that make the people who have been there say, "Yes, that's the way it was," and the people who have not been there say, "That is how it must have been."

Those books will probably not be written for a long time. I have a feeling that they will not be written by the men who are well-known today, although some of them will undoubtedly write good books about the war.

My feeling is that the great books of this war will be written by a boy who did no writing before he put on the uniform, who struggled anonymously through the abuse and horror of a rifle company, trying only to survive, like the men around him, through the death and monotony; who has come to know America through the casual, intimate, long conversations with his fellow citizens from the forty-eight states on guard, in the riflepits, in the canteens, and foreign bars. He will be a man who has suffered the full measure of the common experience from Fort Benning to Tokyo, and suffered it not as a note-taker and observer, as any writer inevitably must, but with the same sense of personal, submerged persecution and wry humor as all the men around him. He will not write like Hemingway or like Remarque, because that was another war, and, even though all wars must be considerably alike, there must also be a style for their differences. He will not merely throw up his hands in horror at the agony and waste, because we did that once, too, and this must be new, and we have learned that agony and waste are not the final answer.

HE will be the voice of the inarticulate army, the army which does not scream, "Down with Fascism!" as it presses the trigger, nor "Up, Democracy!" as it charges the pillbox, making the war that much more difficult for the dialogue writers of Hollywood. He will make us understand how the bitter, sour soldier, cynical and contemptuous and jealous of the stay-at-homes, shy and wordless in the face of the expressed ideals for which we say we are fighting, still, by his mere presence on the battlefield and by his behavior there, is the real and hopeful expression of those ideals.

And the girls will be in the book, and the queer places, and the crooks and blowhards and the men who turned a pretty penny and the men who were afraid, and the constant ruthless exposure of the nature of the human race, which war, like a tireless scalpel, is endlessly making. . . .

The art of writing, like the art of surgery, profits from war. The surgeon does not delight in the new variety of disasters to the human body he is called upon to treat upon the battlefield, nor is he pleased with the millions of fresh patients for his experiments. Yet he cannot help but come out of the experience wider and deeper in knowledge than he was before he went in. So with the writer. He will shudder and weep, but he will learn as he never learned before. . . .

As I said at the beginning, I am sorry for writers in the war, but I am even sorrier for writers out of it.

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Novelists and/or Historians

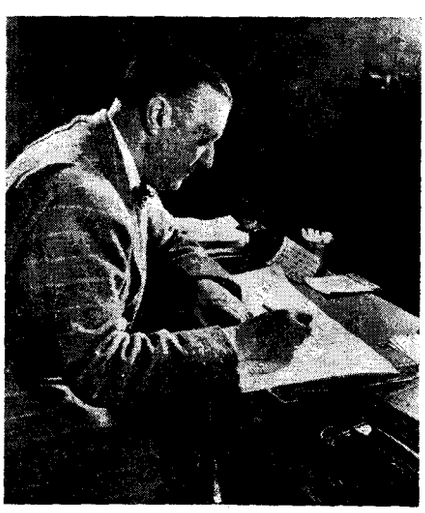
The Historical Novel Poses a Difficult Problem for the New Writer

JOHN FARRAR

HISTORY as setting must be now more than ever tempting to many a writer contemplating his first novel, or to others who have achieved their first and are preparing to scale that worst of all literary walls, the second. Scores of the fiction reputations and fortunes of our day have resulted from tales set in more brightly costumed if not more violent times. The wary novelist, however, will remember, while scanning reference books and rolling the virgin sheet into the typewriter, that many, perhaps the majority, of our new writers of the next years are themselves now taking part in a violent kind of history. Among this gallant company are not only future writers but future readers, and I suspect that those now defending the freedom of the word will be quite definite in their tastes and demands concerning it. For writers and editors to try to calculate future taste without considering these preoccupied millions of individuals is to run the risk of becoming suddenly and violently outmoded.

There has been much discussion in recent weeks of the historical novel. Mr. Harrison Smith has written accurately and wisely on the subject several times in these pages. This discussion is at least partly due to the somewhat startling appearance of a recent but not unique phenomenon in the world of books. This sport was announced by its publishers as a work of historical fiction. A literary phenomenon usually creates a vogue for books of a similar kind, as well as critical and journalistic discussion. Throughout the years, novels of all types are produced and quietly reach the people who like them. There is always, for example, a loyal group of readers who read Western stories and detective stories; but a motion picture success like "The Covered Wagon" sent thousands of extra readers to Westerns, as the appearance of an S. S. Van Dine vastly increased the sales of other mystery stories.

In the late twenties and early thirties, historical fiction was being written and read, but not in best-seller quantities. In 1933, when Hervey Allen's mammoth "Anthony Adverse" arrived along with the Chicago World's Fair, and was followed by Mrs. Mitchell's supermammoth "Gone with the Wind," the vogue for historical fiction was revived and in one form or another has continued ever since—due chiefly, no doubt, to the fact that the events of today are both difficult to detail and painful to face. The discussion of historical fiction, however, had died away and its revival, oddly enough, was provoked by a novel which has nothing whatever to do with the case—no more, indeed, than "The Robe" or "The Song of Bernadette"—although both of these novels have, of course, historical settings. For Miss Winsor's "Forever Amber" is certainly neither historical novel nor historical romance. It belongs in quite another category. Her choice of setting was convenient, but not inevitable. "Forever Amber" is bedroom or, more explicitly, couch fiction of which now and then some examples become widely notorious. Remember some of them? Robert W. Chambers's "The Common Law," Elinor Glyn's "Three Weeks," E. M. Hull's "The Sheik." They are with us now and then, these under-the-pillow tomes. They are the kind of sensational concoction that the ingenuous parent makes glamorous by hopefully hiding from the young and supposedly innocent. What the more noticed authors of this type of fiction possess that others who attempt the same deadly bonbons do not possess escapes me. Possibly they feel less embarrassment than most in betraying themselves as tasteless. Possibly they have, in addition to the necessary gift of keeping their story moving, a kind of naive recognition of the pleasures and none of the pains of lust, and the appeal of skilfully undraped and exaggerated characters and perfervid settings. These hoydenish extraverts use sex-play in much the same fashion as an adventure story writer uses gunplay. Anyhow, enough of this. In book form, this type of writing fortunately, perhaps, hits the jackpot (for which it is always aimed) less often than other types more soberly intentioned. Perhaps publishers should be forgiven for occasionally cherishing the Elinor Glyns and the Kathleen Winsors, since the magazines and motion pictures are more often guilty.



—*Eric Schaal*

Kenneth Roberts

Returning now to the new writer who seeks history as the setting of his novel—he has many examples to follow. Yet first he should examine his own reasons for preferring to write of the past rather than of the present. Is his motive to provide escape for the reader, or for himself? Many authors, I have observed, escape into the historical setting to avoid reality, just as others escape into the detective story or the Western or the spy story, or other varieties of the fiction of action rather than of feeling. Many of these writers cannot write or are too lazy to learn to write the essential scene or create the living character. Alas, some of them could never learn, anyhow. Such writers are often more expert at setting up pasteboard scenery than making a scene come alive. They can more often achieve drama by gunfire or sword-play than by the conflict of passion or the well-springs of tenderness.

THE old game of categories is fun. It is also sometimes useful. Suppose we try dividing historical fiction into the following categories—the historical novel, the period novel, the historical romance or adventure. Any one of these categories may be used by a great writer to produce a work great of its kind, and the three can of course, depending on the skill of the writer, be mixed and mingled. The historical novelist, as I define him, integrates character and setting, is more concerned with life than with when it was lived. He writes "Henry Esmond," "War and Peace," "Notre Dame of Paris," "Death Comes for the Archbishop." The period novelist is more interested in detailing his backgrounds in research rather than presenting the whole of life. He writes, "The Bride of Lammermoor," "Drums Along the Mohawk," "Show Boat." The writer of historical romance or adventure subordinates setting and character to action. He writes "The Count of Monte Cristo," "A Tale of Two Cities," "The Deerslayer," "Richard Carvel," "To Have and To Hold."

Any one of them achieves greatness

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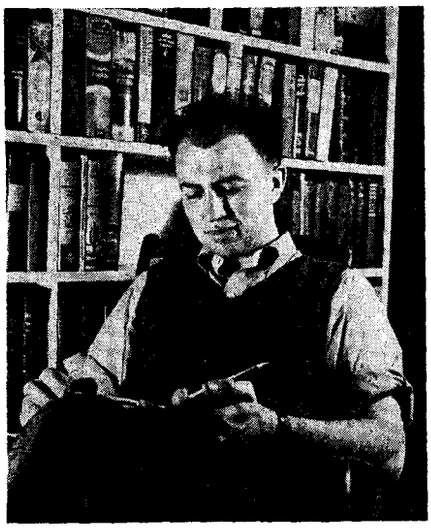

Howard Fast

when his readers never suspect that they are in a museum, when they know people and events illuminated by a background that enriches both character and action and as they read become so comfortable that they are lost in the stream of history.

It is a curious fact, again already noted by Mr. Smith in a *Saturday Review* editorial, that in novels of the last category it has become almost a convention that no woman of reality appears and that most of the heroes are either apathetic or strenuously, often apologetically, virtuous. (One recommends here a reading of D. H. Lawrence's discussion of the women of Cooper—one of the most curious pieces of Freudian criticism ever penned.) The best of these romances overcome the lack, sweeping story along without alloting the reader time to miss the absent clinches, or even to notice the ever present cliches. We have learned to prefer lustier fare, rounder figures. Howard Fast and Kenneth Roberts can triumph over their slighting of the feminine because they offer illuminating historical research —and, especially Mr. Fast, thematic treatments.

A catalogue of novelists both English and American who have written recently in these categories would occupy many pages. I have not mentioned Tarkington or Hergesheimer, Sabatini or Percival Wrenn, John Buchan or the Baroness Orczy, "The Tree of Liberty," or Robert Briffault's soggy "Europa." There were Alexander Laing's "The Sea Witch," Costain's latest, and "Captain from Castile," by Samuel Shellabarger. Perhaps one reason a new writer turns to historical romance or adventure is that, especially for a man, it is more respectable than the modern romance. Tom Costain could scarcely attempt the mantle of Gene Stratton Porter without losing his amateur standing.

The time for the great popularity of this kind of novel has perhaps gone —although I believe a faithful band (largely composed of men) will always follow it. At the moment it looks as though all literate novels with historical settings would find a public, now and perhaps forever. However, we should none of us be misled by current book sales. They are symptomatic of nothing, I fancy, except that people will now read practically anything. This kind of indiscriminate reading on the part of the public may vanish almost over night. It did after the last war, and again in 1929. Such changes in reading volume and taste will not be predicted or ascertained by Mr. Gallup or his ilk. Not in the book world at any rate. There has always seemed to me a certain mortuary feeling about publishers who employ Mr. Gallup. When the Gallup poll enters, spontaneity vanishes. Someone ought to write a play about a mythical Mr. Gallup who advised Shakespeare. Or maybe Mr. Gallup was one of the witches in "Macbeth."

The author who writes the outstanding book of his time and creates the vogue sometimes rationalizes after the fact, but never, I am sure, before. Mr. Gallup may estimate it as it develops but will never spot its incidence. I'm willing to bet that this outstanding book of the next five years will be written by a man or woman now actively engaged in the business of war and that, while it may be a historical novel, it will not be either period novel, historical romance, or adventure, or indeed hysterical romance.

The new writer, if he is minded to delve into the past, would be wise to write history as non-fiction and, if he must woo historical fiction, be sure that he is novelist first and historian afterward. In a world in which there is much need for escape, true escape is more likely to be found in fiction where men and women, whether in forest, cathedral, boudoir, or counting house, whether in 1652 or 1945, act as men and women and not as puppets.

Broken-Off Song

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

HE did not know what had come over the bird,
It lay on the ground, it had forgotten its wings,
Its eyes were feverish with joy, its throat
Was swollen out the way it is when it sings.

The mysterious marks, the feathery suns and moons,
Grown on its wings to keep a mate in awe
And frighten off enemies like lightning-stones,
Lay still, so any one wishing to see them saw.

Something was the trouble, something bad,
The bird maybe was out of its shining head.
Then the man looked closer, then he saw
The coil of a beauty that chokes off breath, ahead.

It was a flame, which burned yet did not burn,
Terrible letters changing at every turn,
Spelling out words like Arabic, black and green
And azure that blushed into blood with sudden sheen.

And in the center of this coil of letters
A green flame licked, it swayed this way and this,
And two little cold stars blazed each side of the flame,
The man could hear their black and hot centers hiss.

O fire so beautiful it runs between
The ribs, and the red heart yearns and burns to be hit!
O eyes of a god that look death and are kind!
The man saw the snake and trembled with deep love of it.

But some angel younger than the ancient ones
Raised the man's hand, fitted it with the stone,
The worship went out of his wide eyes,
Hate came brimming in, and the stone was thrown.

The fever burned out slow in the bird's globed eyes
And left the bird a weak bunch of feathers, freed.
Yet somehow the man felt he would always feel
He had broken off a song by a sorry deed.

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Personal History of "Strange Fruit"

A Statement of Purposes and Intentions

LILLIAN SMITH

THERE are two forces in every reader that an author cannot long remain unaware of: a resistance to knowledge of self and a consuming curiosity about people. If, by reading a book, one can satisfy this curiosity about others without having to acquire in the process painful knowledge of one's self, pleasure ensues. The author will likely be pleased also, both by sales and comments, and his book will not be misunderstood, for there will be no need for misunderstanding. But should he tactlessly compel the reader to identify himself with a character or situation unflattering to self-esteem, then heaven help us! Whether it be a good book or a poor one, it has to be misunderstood, and the pasting of labels is inevitable.

There is, however, a third alternative. By happy chance, so delicate a balance may be achieved that knowledge of self rises no higher than one's toleration, and knowledge of others reaches no deeper than one's credulity. In which event, the reader may shout to the world that he has discovered a masterpiece. It is possible.

I wouldn't know. For as an author I have not experienced this artistic counterpart of the blessed state of repose between life and death of which Ferenczi writes with such eloquence. "Strange Fruit," somehow, did not turn out that way.

By even the most generous of white critics it was not treated as literature —not even as bad literature. The author's "purpose," they told the reader, was to better race relations, to uncover the "Negro problem"; hence, it was a problem novel. Why else would she have bothered to make of equal importance human beings of two colors, when one color is enough for any "real" novel! Unlike the lady on the library board of a North Carolina city, they did not write in and ask if her purpose was "noble." They assumed that it was. No matter how successful the characters, how interesting the story, how profound the insight, how subtle the imagination—or how otherwise—this "noble purpose" disqualified the author as artist, taking her amateur standing away from her.

The Negro reviewers were not so sure of the nobility of purpose. Some said if the author's purpose was noble, then why did she have Nonnie and Bess, graduates of a well-known college, cook in white folks' kitchens? "Because" (their answer was immediate) "the author is white and wants young Negro college graduates to work in white folks' kitchens; and probably also, she does not like Negro colleges." "Why," came the next question, "did the author let Bess, a college graduate, take off her shoes on a hot evening when her corns hurt?" "Because," came the answer, "Bess was Negro and should not, according to the white author's deep unconscious wishes, have had on shoes at all." The third question was always as follows: "Why did she let Tracy fall in love with a 'light' Negro?" "Because" (swelled the chorus), "the author scorns dark skin and thinks the lighter the skin, the better."

"No," other Negro reviewers said, "she doesn't think that. She wrote primarily about children and mothers; she was trying to break old stereotypes, black and white, and show the human beings beneath them." "But," cried the hearts of sensitive, educated Negroes, "we cannot bear to be shown as human beings in literature unless we are treated like human beings in culture." Which is fair enough.

Quickly, the lunatic fringe of the C.P. took up the chant, word having gone out apparently that the Negro is to be flattered and new stereotypes more pleasing must supersede old displeasing ones. Soon there appeared on the West Coast a pamphlet on the subject "Strange Fruit Attacks the Negro and Labor." And here and there in the East, columnists commented that "Strange Fruit" belittles the Negro and is unfair to labor. The most interesting were the "re-appraisals"—in certain journals—second reviews written by the original reviewer who had the squeamish job of taking back the favorable comments he had innocently and spontaneously made in his first review.

All this time, the lunatic fringe of the fascist groups and the White supremacy crowd (lunatic to the core) were writing editorials and reviews declaring that "Strange Fruit" advocates the mongrelizing of the white race. Gene Talmadge's paper described it as a story of a white girl in love with a Negro boy (the real story being too commonplace for hardened old rural Southerners)and defined it as a "literary corncob" (you may or may not know the varied uses to which the corncob is put in our South), and the once-edited-by-Mark Ethridge *Macon Telegraph* repeated the corncob story on its editorial page. In the meantime, the *Southern Watchman* screamed in headlines that Alabama must not vote for Roosevelt because the author of "Strange Fruit" once wrote a piece in praise of our President.

Up North, the Boston banners, not to be outdone by Dixie demagogues, seized also upon sex, choosing as their battling stick a none-too-isolated word,

Lillian Smith: "I thought of my book as a fable about a son in search of a mother, about a race in search of surcease from pain and guilt. . . ."

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in contrast to the Southerners' none-too-isolated situation.

In Washington the postal authorities banned—

But why go on? What does it add up to?

It may add up to no more than the notion that an author would do well not to subscribe to a clipping bureau!

Or it may mean that a lot of the characters in Maxwell, Georgia, have migrated to other parts of the country and react to S. F. exactly as one would expect them to do at home.

It may mean, also, that Boston banners and Dixie demagogues are always right, but for the wrong reasons. Boston banners and White supremacists felt endangered by the core of the book. The analysis of family life, childhood fantasies, opened too many doors in their memories. Feeling threatened, each chose a symbol by which to express this fear. Boston, eroticizing its literacy, chose a "word"; Dixie, eroticizing its blood stream, chose a situation. Each rationalized its fear consciously by projecting it on "race"—Boston in whispers, Dixie with rebel yells—as the white man has been doing for three centuries. And each betrayed his real fear by the choice of his symbol, as men have done since the beginning of time.

Or it may mean that this book cannot easily harmonize the conflicting forces in readers. It is obviously difficult for the reader (black or white) to forget his skin color long enough to identify with the common humanity of black and white characters. Some do, and close the book, stripped of their color—only to find themselves back in a world where color is a garment custom decrees that everyone must wear.

During all this time, thousands of letters were coming into Clayton saying things quite different from what appeared in the papers—suggesting a deep underground current of human warmth that few of us are aware of.

Among the good letters there naturally are others, the prize one being this brief note: "I have read your book. But since you did not write a preface to it, I do not know what it is about." After reading newspaper clippings for a year, there are times when I am not too sure that I know, either.

But it began, I think, like this:

When I was a little girl I lived in Maxwell, a town more easily found in your own childhood than on any road map. I lived on College Street in a big rambling house set under oak trees, the kind of house that catches memories like dust . . . Rimming the town, a great shadow behind Maxwell, were the shanties of colored folk, and in the north of town were the mills of which my father was owner: white mill town, colored mill town, little white church, little colored church—and one big commissary for all. Across the street from my home was a big white church and out near the graveyard was the unpainted half-tumbled-down church where colored folks worshipped. When I was little, I was rocked to sleep by an old colored nurse who eased the pain of the coming of a new baby in the household by a singing of songs that swept across bruised feelings in warm, soothing waves of sound. When I was older—

though still a child—and lay in my bed at night, I listened to the same songs which came now, not from my old nurse, but from the little unpainted church, backwashing across town, filling the heart with a great burden, making me cry, though I did not know why I was crying. It was then, perhaps, that I first began to feel an invisible wall between human beings, between white folks and colored folks in Maxwell, yes; but also between a child and the people she loves. It did not seem like a strange wall—for nothing seems strange to a child because everything is so strange—but it was there, and I knew it was easy to hurt one's self against it. It was not until many years later that I heard the word "segregation," but I understood it long before I could say its syllables. I knew, and have never forgotten, that segregation has something to do with white and black people—as everyone in America knows—but it has to do also with childhood, and with mothers and their children, and it has to do with the heart's deepest fears and the child's earliest dreams.

I left Maxwell. And for a long time I did not want to go back there. Instead I traveled a good portion of the earth's surface, and I read a good portion of what wise men had written, and I learned quite a few big words and for a time was impressed with my learning, until I discovered that too often a word is only a mask to cover up the real meaning of life. Peeling off masks was a full time job for a while . . . In the process, I learned to be unimpressed by the phrase "Negro problem"; and "race conflict" began to seem to me an euphonious term for a painful and profound struggle that was tearing the breast of the white man; and "Jim Crow" was only a devil mask for elaborate ceremonials by which the troubled white man tried to wall himself off from "infection." That he called this "infection" the "Negro problem" did not mean that the Negro had caused it. It meant only that the Negro was a handy thing on which to project it. We do not need the word "paranoid" to give us understanding of a habit of mankind so common as this of thrusting out upon an external object his internal feelings. But it is not an irrelevant word.

To understand what is troubling the white race so deeply that a great part of its culture is devoted to walling away this trouble, one might have to take a long journey that would lead down interesting by-paths. We might have to look long and hard at certain road signs: at Calvinism, monogamy, at the Western small family, at the high esteem Nordic culture puts on "sex purity" which in practice becomes a regressive displacement of honor on autoeroticism instead of mature genitality. We might have to look also at the Protestant God-the-Father image in contrast to the Catholic Mary-Mother-of-Christ; and we might need to travel to countries where love and mature sex life are honorable and race prejudice is dishonorable, for there may be a close connection between the two—a far closer connection than between poverty and race prejudice. I think, along the way, we would discover that over-esteem of one's skin color, whether in individuals or in masses of men, is a regressive narcism, a symptom of psychosexual maladjustment that involves sex, religion, family life, and yes, money also. We might have to look at the whole of white culture and travel backward in time far beyond that date when the first Negro was enslaved by the first white Christian.

After many years of "traveling," I was ready to go back to Maxwell. And I wrote down in "Strange Fruit" what I found there. I thought of my book as a fable about a son in search of a mother, about a race in search of surcease from pain and guilt—both finding what they sought in death and destruction.

So when people ask "Is 'Strange Fruit' a race book; is it about the Negro problem?" I say, "I don't think so." For it seems to me a book about human beings journeying across deep chasms, and down into forbidding areas, but journeying also back to childhood, always back to the room where they were born, seeking to find, wherever they travel, that which they left there, so long ago.

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When Not to Take Advice

JESSE STUART

IF it were possible for me to rewrite "Taps for Private Tussie" since I have read American critics' reaction to it, would I do it? My answer is definitely no. I have the right to say what I want to write and they the right to write what they want to about it. It is not that I think it is a perfectly written book, for I know it is not. And it is not that I do not respect the critics' opinions. I feel that at least ninety per cent of the criticism of this book is good sound criticism. I think, probably, they lavished too much praise upon it. The critics were too generous with me as they have been with each book that I have written. So it isn't that I have a grudge against the critics for I haven't, and have never had since my first date with them October 14, 1934 when "Man With A Bull-Tongue Plow," my first book, was published.

The main reason why I wouldn't rewrite "Taps" is, I cannot write anything according to pattern. That is, I have to think the thing out for myself. I learned this one thing in college. During those days I wanted to write poetry. And when I wrote a batch of poems I'd take them to one of my English professors; if he praised them I was happy. If he condemned them, I felt badly about it. If he suggested that I throw them aside and "try to write like Shakespeare" I did it. I believed everything my English teachers told me for the period of my college and university days. Suddenly, I rebelled. I rebelled, for each one of them had a different opinion about poetry and I knew somebody was wrong. I returned from the university with a determination to write something to suit myself (I burned five hundred poems that others had told me how to write) and I wrote "Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow." And this idea occurred to me which has been a part of my everyday philosophy! "Write something to suit yourself and many people will like it; write something to suit everybody and scarcely anyone will care for it."

If anybody starts telling me what to write, how to write, and when to write, there is something in me that immediately rebels. For instance, I was told that I couldn't write a sonnet in college. That is one of the main reasons why I use this medium despite its hampering effects. (I hope I've loosened it up a bit). I was told that I couldn't write a short story and I believed my English instructor at that time. Later I thought that I would see. In two days I wrote three short stories. Results: *Story Magazine, Southern Review,* and *The American Mercury* accepted these three stories, and all three stories were on Edward J. O'Brien's Honor Roll for 1936.

Since then I've had approximately three hundred short stories published in quality magazines and books. And I was told that I couldn't write a novel, told not by college English instructors and by critics.

I think it is the nature of the American people to do a thing when they have been told they can't do it. Many of us remember prohibition days when people were told they couldn't drink anything stronger than lemonade. During prohibition days, in this region of America, moonshine licker became a big-time industry. When I was principal of a couple of large high schools, I never put a sign on the school yard to tell the students not to step on the grass for I knew they would do it just to see how the touch of the grass felt to their feet. I removed the signs from the school yard and suggested they didn't walk on the young grass until it was well-rooted in the ground. I don't think a student thereafter stepped on the grass unless it was by accident. I did this because I knew how I'd felt when I was told that I couldn't write a short story, a sonnet, or a novel.

I disagree with many authors about the American critics. I have read authors' criticism of the critics; I have heard them criticize critics—blast them with scorching tongues and say we didn't have a worthwhile critic in America. I think America has more intelligent critics than any country in the world today just as I believe America has many more important writers than any country in the world today. America has the dream and the promise of a great literature yet to come. And this World War II will not stop it, for we are hellbent in America to step on the grass if we are told we can't, hellbent to drink if we are told we can't have it, hellbent to vote if we are told we can't, hellbent to write short stories, sonnets, and novels if we have been told we can't write any of them. We still have vigor in America as a nation of people. And "vigor" was something lost among the peoples of twenty-seven countries that I visited in Europe in 1937-38.

—*Victor Kraft*

Jesse Stuart: "The critics were too generous with me. . . ."

As for my future in America as a writer, I do not know, since critics are pointing out that I can write a short story, a novel, and a sonnet. That is why I say the main fault I have had to find with critics in America with me individually is, they have been too lavish with their praise. Critics have praised my books highly when the public wouldn't buy them. For instance, one book of mine highly reviewed sold less than a thousand copies. But I remember that the critics pointed out in 1934 that I had written myself out in poetry when I put 703 sonnets into "Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow" and that as a poet I was finished. I have held their remarks in mind for ten years. I haven't forgotten nor will I forget those remarks. Thanks to the American critics.

TO A CERTAIN UNCERTAIN ASSERTIN' CRITIC

By David McCord

HE takes the long review of things;
He asks and gives no quarter.
And you can sail with him on wings
Or read the book. It's shorter.

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New Novelists of 1944

ALICE HACKETT

THAT the most talked-about fiction titles of the past year were written by new novelists is an interesting and important fact for American literature. And since to be talked-about, to achieve word-of-mouth advertising, is the most effective way of promoting book sales, a few of these new writers' books were the outstanding hits of the year.

In some cases, critical esteem went along with financial success, as was the case with the novel that perhaps outsold any other in the bookstores of America in 1944. This was "Strange Fruit," by Lillian Smith, published by Reynal & Hitchcock almost a year ago. Even though it was out of stock many times during the course of the year because of paper shortage, and though it could not be sold in Boston stores, 470,000 copies of "Strange Fruit" passed over bookstore counters in 1944.

Unfavorable criticism of this novel about whites and Negroes in the South condemned its "uncouth speech." Most reviewers* hailed its understanding and integrity, its honest interpretation of the Negro mind and problems. Edward Weeks in *The Atlantic* considered it a new "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and Malcolm Cowley said in *The New Republic*, "Not a promise but an achievement." Another first novel dealing with conflict between races in the South was Hodding Carter's "The Winds of Fear" (Farrar & Rinehart), recipient of the Southern Writers' Award for 1944.

Although "Strange Fruit" was Lillian Smith's first published novel, she is not an unpractised writer. As editor of the magazine *South Today*, she has mastered the craft of translating her ideas on race relationships into print. Miss Smith grew up in Clayton, Georgia, where her father was owner of the mills, the town's chief industry. In 1921, she went to China, where she taught music in the Methodist Mission School.

Equally publicized in 1944, a book perhaps just as much talked about as "Strange Fruit," was "Forever Amber." Its author, Kathleen Winsor, was the literary glamor girl of the year. Authors, as a rule, are not as photogenic as Miss Winsor, so that the Macmillan Company made effective use of the Reves-Belo picture of her in advertising the book, and of her presence at literary teas, book fairs, etc. With "Strange Fruit," "Forever Amber" shared the notoriety of being banned in Boston, not for its language but for what were termed the "questionable morals" of its heroine. There was little question, however, about Amber's morals; they were decidedly lax. Most reviewers balked at the outpouring of Restoration England's bawdiness, but some praised the book as robust and vivid, and considered the 700-odd pages fast-moving and absorbing reading.

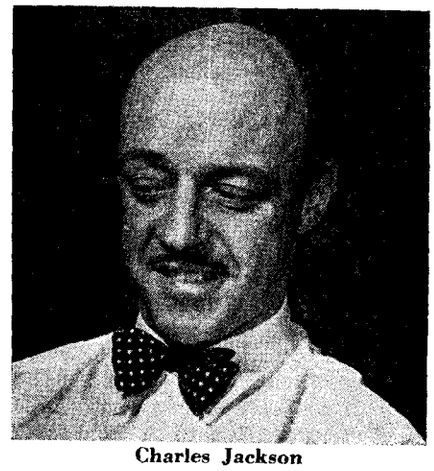
There has been division of opinion about the authenticity of "Forever Amber's" background. Historical novelists, however, usually are permitted some license in adapting detail to the cause of their plots. The story of the origin of the book has often been told. Unlike Lillian Smith, Kathleen Winsor has only amateur standing as a writer. She became interested in the England of Charles II when her husband, a classmate at the University of California, brought home some books on the period while working on a student thesis. Kathleen Winsor has lived in California most of her life, but came to New York while her book was being produced. Hollywood is now interested in making a movie of it and Miss Winsor has even been mentioned as a candidate for the title role.

Historical fiction occupied the attention of quite a number of the past year's writers. Most highly praised by critics was "The History of Rome Hanks," by Joseph Stanley Pennell (Scribner). It was not entirely as a historical novelist that they most admired Mr. Pennell, but for the originality of his presentation, his vocabulary, and for his experimental style. The absence of quotation marks and the mingling of past and present scenes without transition were, however, troublesome to some readers. His book was also banned by several booksellers in Boston and Cambridge on complaint of the Watch and Ward Society because of its frankly realistic language.

About "Rome Hanks," Orville Prescott predicted in *The New York Times*, "It is unlikely that any novel this year will cause such furious disagreements, such enthusiasm, and such rage." Besides being impressed by the author's novelty of presentation, critics found the book admirable for its vivid descriptions, especially of Civil War battles. Said N. K. Burger in *The New York Times*, ". . . the story of our nation . . . has been handled with a sweep and scope and awareness that has not been equalled since Stephen Vincent Benét wrote 'John Brown's Body.'"

*In referring to reviewers' opinions in this article, I have purposely gone outside *The Saturday Review*.

John Hersey



Charles Jackson

Elliott Arnold

Harry Brown

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Ellen Berlin **Jean Stafford** **Gwethalyn Graham** **Kathleen Winsor**

Many reviewers compared Mr. Pennell's writing to that of Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner.

Joseph Pennell finished "The History of Rome Hanks" just before he was inducted into the Army. He was a newspaperman and had written verse, articles, and short stories. He was born in 1908 in Junction City, Kansas. "Rome Hanks" is drawn from his own family history, from his great-grandfather's and grandfather's Civil War experiences.

Post-Civil War days, in New Orleans and Texas, was the period of "The Mocking Bird Is Singing," by E. Louise Mally (Holt), a good story of the nineteenth century American business men. The end of the Revolution up to the War of 1812 formed the background for "The Seas Stand Watch," by Helen Parker Mudgett (Knopf), the story of a New England sea captain and his French wife. F. H. Bullock said, in the *New York Herald Tribune,* "Helen Parker Mudgett is a working historian with the fruits of long years of research as the harvest of an able mind. When such a writer turns to and produces historical fiction it is likely to have real value."

Critical comment emphasized the fact that Mildred Masterson McNeilly's "Heaven Is Too High (Morrow) dealt with a little-known period in American history. It was an exciting story of Russian pioneering in Alaska, from 1790 to 1810. "Tom Bone," by Charles B. Judah (Morrow), was considered good escape reading, a historical romance of the slave-trading era in England and the New World. "The Emperor's Physician," by Jacob R. Perkins (Bobbs-Merrill), went back to the time of the beginning of Christianity. It was a story of two physicians, sent out by Rome, who met Jesus of Nazareth. It was a scholarly and intellectual book that succeeded in a year when novels of religious significance, such as Lloyd C. Douglas's "The Robe," were widely read.

In contrast to these in theme and reader interest were several psychological first novels. Outstanding in sales and word-of-mouth advertising was "The Lost Weekend," by Charles Jackson. Though it portrayed intimately five dreadful days of an alcoholic's career, John Chamberlain, in *The New York Times,* termed "The Lost Weekend"—"the most moral book in a decade." Charles Jackson says the novel is one-third autobiographical, one-third biographical, and one-third imaginary, though Mr. Jackson has not taken a drink in eight years. He, too, is a practised writer, having worked in radio and on magazines. Now he is living in the country on the proceeds of his first novel (already filmed), and writing his second. Critics, as well as the public, were impressed by "The Lost Weekend's" subject matter and its penetration into the mind of a dipsomaniac. Orville Prescott summed it up in *The Yale Review* with the comment, "It has a gruesome fascination."

Less successful in catching the public fancy were two other first novels exploring the more terrifying aspects of human behavior. Farrar & Rinehart, publishers of "The Lost Weekend," brought out, late in December, "Brainstorm," in which Carlton Brown gave the case history of an apparently normal advertising man, who went insane, was put in a mental hospital, and was cured. Earlier in the year Coward-McCann had published "Nonce," by Michael Brandon, a violent tale of murder and voodoo in a remote spot on the Southern coast. It was called "original and uninhibited" and Rachel Hastings, writing in *The Chicago Sun,* said, "If the book is not a hoax and there really is such a person as Michael Brandon, I'm looking forward to reading the work he turns out ten years from now."

There were five notable war stories produced by first novelists in 1944, surely a good promise of what literature may be expected to come out of this war, especially under the generally-accepted theory that the great war novels are not written until quite a number of years afterward. Best known and best in sales was "A Bell for Adano," by John Hersey (Knopf). His previously published "Men on Bataan" and "Into the Valley" were not novels but accounts of war in the Pacific as he saw it as a correspondent. He had previously been private secretary to Sinclair Lewis and was sent to the Orient by *Time* in 1939. The third book to reflect his observations as a war correspondent took the form of a novel, the story of an A.M.G. officer in Italy. Some reviewers considered it reporting rather than creative writing, but John Chamberlain said it marked "the birth of a new Hemingway" and Orville Prescott considered Hersey ". . . so enormously gifted a young writer, there's no telling how far he may go." All agreed, however, upon the importance of "A Bell for Adano's" message. Jerre Mangione, in *The New York Times,* said, "What Mr. Hersey has to say in 'A Bell for Adano' should make the reading public and the Army sit up." The Council on Books in Wartime named the book an "Imperative" and it has become one of the great hits of this season as a play on Broadway. Since writing "A Bell for Adano," Mr. Hersey has been sent to Moscow as correspondent for *Time* and *Life,* so we may expect, as his next book, whether fiction or nonfiction, a vivid report on still another war theatre.

A short novel, also laid in Italy, but a novel about fighting rather than military administration of civilian affairs, was "A Walk in the Sun," by Harry Brown (Knopf). It told the story of a platoon on a beachhead, a corporal finally taking over its command and accomplishing its mission after the lieutenant and three sergeants were killed. John Hersey said of it in the *New York Herald Tribune,* "The

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book is by a soldier who is also a poet and it is very good indeed."

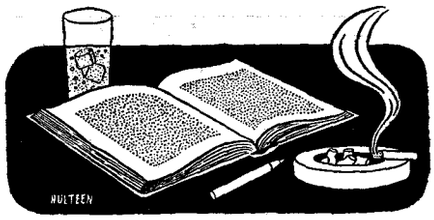
"Valley in the Sky" (Houghton Mifflin) was written by another soldier under combat conditions. Hobert Douglas Skidmore has been a waist-turret-gunner in a bomber in the South Pacific. He started his book in camp, continued it in the ship's office, and finished it in a foxhole under almost continuous raids. His story of the bomber, *Harpie,* and her crew is real and hard-hitting. Sterling North wrote of it in *The Chicago Sun,* "This is the sort of war novel one might expect years hence when time has lent perspective."

A number of reviewers compared Frederic Wakeman's tough, realistic descriptions of war veterans on leave in San Francisco to Hemingway; many did not take his "Shore Leave" (Farrar & Rinehart) too seriously. His South Pacific veterans back for leave after strenuous fighting were chiefly interested in seeing how many drinks and how many women they could get. The author has, himself, seen service in the Pacific. He is now back in the advertising business which he had left to join the Navy.

AN American Airlines pilot, Ernest K. Kann, who had written non-fiction books about flying, told a stirring story of a plane of the Army Transport Command forced down in the Canadian wilderness in "Island in the Sky" (Viking Press). This may possibly not be considered a war novel, as is the case with a number of other 1944 first novels in which the war backgrounds are only incidental.

War was the setting but not the main theme, for instance, of a fine novel by Gwethalyn Graham, whose name is new to most of the hundreds of thousands who have read her "Earth and High Heaven" (Lippincott). Miss Graham is a Canadian, whose first book, "Swiss Sonata," was published by Scribner in 1938. The problem of "Earth and High Heaven" is that of the marriage of the daughter of a highly conservative Montreal family to a young Jewish lawyer. "The tone of the book as a whole is so clear and so just, the characters are so human, the central theme is so admirably developed that it calls for entire respect," write Iris Barry in the *New York Herald Tribune.* "Earth and High Heaven" has been and still is a great popular success. A portion of it was serialized in *Collier's* and it was a Literary Guild selection.

In "Some of My Best Friends Are Soldiers" (Simon & Schuster), Margaret Halsey's theme was racial intolerance as it cropped out in a soldiers' canteen in New York City. Miss Halsey had made a great hit with her first



book, "With Malice Toward Some," in 1938, in which she poked fun at our English cousins. Her barbed humor was what made that book such a success. To find similar wisecracks in a novel on a seriously disturbing subject bothered some critics. Miss Halsey, herself, called her second book only "a kind of novel." It was composed of letters written by the heroine to her brother in the Army, describing life at home under wartime conditions and the difficulties of her work at the canteen.

Ellen Berlin, wife of Irving Berlin, wrote her first novel, "Land I Have Chosen" (Doubleday, Doran), in 1944. She had had numerous stories published in magazines. Laid in the 1920's and 1930's, the book was concerned with Nazi ideology—the contrast of a spoiled American society woman and a German actress who had left her native country. Nazism was the theme, too, of "No Mortal Fire," by Elsa Valentine (Simon & Schuster). It was a story of a German-American family, from 1914 to 1939, whose eldest daughter turned wholeheartedly to Nazi theories. A decidedly original scheme to destroy Hitler formed the plot of William Gilmore Reymer's "12:20 P.M." (Whittlesey House). Saul Bellow, whose "Dangling Man" (Vanguard Press) was the story of a man's year "dangling" between two worlds after he has given up his job and before he is inducted into the Army, had been a reviewer and contributor to little magazines.

Three foreign-born authors, now in this country, had their first novels published here during the past year. Most successful was "Peter Domanig," by Victor White (Bobbs-Merrill). Mr. White was born in Vienna in 1902; his father an English engineer, his mother an Austrian. His hero, Peter Domanig, was an illegitimate, oppressed, poverty-stricken boy, growing up in Vienna during the First World War. Reviewers found excellent the background and details of Viennese life in his story.

Austria in the 1930's, during the growth of Nazism, was the scene of "The Outnumbered," by Berlin-born Catherine Hutter (Dodd, Mead). Her sincere story of a Jewish waif who became an ardent Catholic and finally a symbol to the people of a little mountain village was called "a surprisingly good try" by Margaret Wallace in *The New York Times.* Powerful, though loosely constructed, seemed to be the verdict upon "The Lord Is a Man of War" (Knopf), written by Stanley F. Donath, a refugee of Czech heritage, now living in New Jersey. Its hero stopped at little in the way of murder and violence to avenge the killing of his father by one of his own former schoolmates. Not a first novel, though his first to be published in this country, Robert Pick's "The Terhoven File" (Lippincott) was one of the most distinguished works of fiction to come from the pen of a refugee.

Two new writers of detective fiction were mentioned on many lists of the year's best. They were Hilda Lawrence, author of "Blood Upon the Snow" (Simon & Schuster) and Rosemary Kutak, who wrote "Darkness of Slumber" (Lippincott). Movie actor George Sanders also wrote a first mystery story, in which he cast himself as the amateur detective. It was called "Crime on My Hands" (Simon & Schuster).

Regional literature was also represented by some newcomers. "Crazy Weather" (Macmillan), a story of a Mojave Indian reservation, was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. A number of reviewers compared it to "Laughing Boy." The author, Charles I. McNichols, spent his youth on eleven different Indian reservations. Nearby New Mexico was the scene of "The Life and Death of Little Jo," by Robert Bright (Doubleday, Doran). Winner of the first Lewis & Clark Northwest Contest, which E. P. Dutton & Co. opened to writers from the Northwest states, was Clyde F. Murphy. His "The Glittering Hill" was a boisterous tale of the Irish population of Butte, Montana, in the 1890's. The dust storm region of South Dakota was the setting for "The Golden Bowl," by Feike Feikema (Webb Book Publishing Co.). The only Eastern author among these five was Elisabeth Ogilvie, who wrote with feeling and charm about an island off the Maine coast in "High Tide at Noon" (Crowell).

THE first-novel prizewinners of 1944 were Dorothea Cornwell, Catherine Laurence, and Rosemary Obermeyer. Miss Cornwell, young Louisville writer, won the $10,000 Dodd, Mead-*Redbook* Prize Novel award for her "They Dare Not Go A-Hunting." It earned such varied comments as Mary Ross's "finely wrought" and Carlos Baker's "spurious realism." The main fault reviewers found with Miss Laurence's "The Narrowing Wind," awarded the Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship, was that it offered no solution to the social problems it posed. The Catholic press was particularly enthusiastic about Miss Obermeyer's "Golden Apples of the Sun" (Dutton), winner of the Avery Hopwood Award and a Catholic Book Club selection. "She has crossed Borrow with Robert

(*Continued on page* 41)

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Strictly Personal

I HAD A BABY INSTEAD

YOU an immigrant? I mean your father and mother came off some boat sometime? Okay! You're gonna be a writer. That's the best thing for you, the hell with the pantsmaking, the hell with being a messenger with Western Union first. Start right in as a writer. It's the best profession and the easiest racket in the world so long as you know a little broken English; you write it down, you look at it, you not only think you're a genius but you send it to the publishers and they'll send ambassadors after you. I swear to Christ: Ambassadors! That's the way I started. All I did was write a story, just a story, but I had six words of broken English, and nine publishers sent ambassadors after me, and then I took one that I liked who was called John Woodburn, because he told jokes, and ever since I've got nothing to worry about. And if that didn't happen, the story with the six words of broken English, I'd be out in the streets today because the W.P.A. folded when the war came. I took those six words of broken English, talked it over with John, and wrote a whole book, and now I not only have some money in the bank, but some people even call me a writer sometime. So you see, that's how you get started.

And look, if you're Portuguese or Greek, . . . boy, get ready for a fortune because the publishers are looking for you night and day in all the bars. That's all they talk about. . . . "You know any Portuguese immigrant writing a book? You know any Greek?" They're looking for guys like you high and low because sometimes they make money too, and if you are what you are, you better get started quick. Of course, you got to write about the family. The broken English is your insurance, but don't take any chances with the imagination; nobody cares about imagination and besides it might get you into a lot of trouble later, because then some of those publishers might want you to write another book.

All right, you write about the family. The broken English and the family. Now you're all set to go ahead except one thing: How much money you wanna make? A lot? Okay! First thing you do is not what I did, because what I did was a mistake and cost me a lot of money from the movies and things like that (though I still made plenty), but what you do is what that guy George Papashvily did in his book called "Anything Can Happen," and what Kathryn Forbes did in her book called "Mama's Bank Account," which is now turned over into a play called "I Remember Mama," and it's going to make so much money for Kathryn she can hire somebody to see that after a certain amount she won't make anymore.

There's a lot of money in this writing, but you don't do what I did, you do what they did. And it's this: If your father is a Portuguese and he came to America and if sometimes he starved and if every Saturday night two cops used to bat him on the head just to practise with the nightstick . . . for God's sake . . . don't put that in, because then people might think America is not America, and your book would sell only a hundred copies to your relatives. No, what you do is get America in the book, like this guy Papashvily did; your father loves America, no matter where he goes in the book, what he does, what he sees . . . AMERICA! It wasn't his country when he came here, but now that he is here . . . it is. You get it? The book's got to have the spirit of a yankee doodle boy and, bingo, you got a guarantee of a hundred thousand copies! Now don't forget, if you're making your father the hero, and you happen to remember that every time they played "The Star Spangled Banner" he used to sit down, for God's sake, don't put it in the book. And don't make the mistake I made.

When I think of my book I know who was the donkey . . . Me! You see, my father, a Calabrian, was jealous of my mother. He was a guy who used to accuse milk bottles of making love to my mother, and he used to curse a lot, and he tried to put it over on a lot of people including his sons, some landlords, and a few insurance companies, and all these little things Papa did I put into the book, instead of putting in once in a while that he visited the Statue of Liberty and tears came into his eyes. That's where I missed up on all kinds of fortunes, but it could have been worse. Once my father was a scab in a dress factory so that he could support Mama who was making two trips a year to Italy to try to get back my sister Helen whom we had loaned to an uncle out there. And I didn't put into the book that Papa was a

George Panetta: "There's a lot of money in this writing, but you don't do what I did. . . ."

scab: that would have ruined me. Mr. Papashvily put in he was a scab in "Anything Can Happen," but he also put in that he realized it was un-American, and atoned, and that saved a lot of copies on his book. I wouldn't have had the brains to make Papa a scab, and then to unscab him so that he would be truly, spiritually, an American. . . .

SO you've got the broken English, the family, and the spirit of America, that's a couple of hundred thousand copies! Now get some gentleness in it. If you've got a Mama, make her gentle. "Mama's Bank Account" was the story of a gentle Norwegian mother, and look what that's doing. A play, movies, new editions, contracts for everything, just because Kathryn had the brains enough to make Mama gentle. You see, this gentle is what the reviewers like. They even help you when you've got something gentle. They take two words, *tender* and *heartwarming,* and they spin a beautiful review about your book; they do such a beautiful job that the people go buying your book just because they think they'll get something as beautiful as the review. A hundred thousand copies more just because your Mama was gentle enough to turn the reviewer into an essayist. That's where I made a big mistake, my Mama wasn't gentle. Mama was always hollering and getting panicky and accusing everybody of stealing the dime she put under St. Theresa's statue, including St. Theresa. And when the reviewers read about my Mama they couldn't call her gentle because half the time I suppose they felt Mama was trying to talk them into having babies, just as she did with us, and I guess when they were finished a lot of those reviewers were relieved to find they weren't pregnant. No, my book didn't have the America and the

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gentle, and I'm telling you about it, so that you'll have it and won't go around asking people to pray that your book will go into a second printing (though I've made plenty). . . . And another thing: the America and gentle in your book will keep you from fooling around with lawyers.

That's another headache I got, besides all the money I didn't make like Kathryn Forbes and George Papashvily. I got mixed up with a lawyer. A guy named Melville Cane. He's the nicest guy in the world, and he tries to save you from everything, and writes poetry about Niebelungs. You see, everybody likes to be gentle, but nobody likes to be what he is. And so Melville told me I had to get protection from being sued by the following people: My Uncle Louie; my brothers P. J. and Aldo; my wife Evelyn (because you can never tell); my sisters Jenny, Helen, and Betty; my brother-in-law Frank; my sisters-in-law Susie, Rose, and Ida; all my aunts; and my mother, because although she had given birth to me, she knew that America was a land of opportunity. I didn't have to get waivers from my brother Aly, because he was in the Army, and Papa, because he had died in the middle of the book. I got all these waivers, and I had to promise everybody a thousand dollars if the book made a lot of money; and I promised that, as soon as I got into the big dough, we'd buy a piece of land and call it White Donkey Villa, and all of us would live there, each little family with his house, a well for everybody, horses for those that liked horses, and a brook running through all the houses, which everybody could go swim in. And like that they all signed. Now the whole family goes in all the book stores in New York, Macy's, Brentano's, Scribner's, Doubleday's (all of 'em) and asks how the book is doing, and they always have to pronounce the title two or three times because none of the goddamn book-clerks ever heard of it. And so for God's sake, if you're gonna write this book, make the whole family heroes. Say something sweet about everybody.

ALL right, you've got the broken English, the family, the America, and the gentle. You're all set now except for one thing. While you're writing the book you can do anything, scratch your head, eat Indian nuts, look at nobody up the ceiling, but for the love of God, don't get your wife pregnant. That's what happened to me. I was going all right for two chapters and then, pop, I'm in the midst of pregnancy. It killed my continuity. That's why all my chapters after the first two look like the first two; I never knew where I left off, and when I began again I began just the way I did before and that's why one of the reviewers in Washington said my book was nothing but noise noise noise. My publisher called it gusto, but that reviewer was right, it was noise noise noise because there was no difference anymore when my wife began sitting on two chairs. I would come home from work with a dream, eat dinner all right, and get set to write. I would begin with the word I (because that's the kind of writer I am) and then . . . a pain! The little baby minus three or four months old would start to kick around and I would have to jump up from the word I and call up the whole family to check all the pains my sisters-in-law ever had, and before you know it . . . that's all there was . . . the word I. And when I managed to get the chapter done between pains it would always come out the same as the chapter before, with the noise, and do you know how many thousand copies that cost me? Do you know how many copies of my book I would have sold if the chapters were all different from one another? . . . So be careful, will you? Wait till after the book if you gotta have babies, there's always time for them. . . . So okay. You've got the broken English, the family, the America, the gentle, and you won't have a baby while you're writing . . . that's all you need—you're in! Just get it down on paper, staple the pages in the upper left hand corner, and watch the dough roll in. The hell with pantsmaking!

GEORGE PANETTA.

Domesticating the Murderer

HILDA LAWRENCE

WHEN a woman writes a detective novel because she wants something to read, then has it accepted and published by absolute strangers, has it bought and paid for by people who are no connection even by marriage, she ought to keep very quiet. But private wondering isn't enough; the urge to say something about anything connected with the whole beautiful business is too strong. So—

Everybody knows that all nice people read detective novels. Some boast of four to five a week; some admit, when cornered, to one. That's the reader statistic, familiar to me because I used to be in the four-to-five class myself. When I could find four or five. The detective novel addict rarely rereads. He needs and must have his rations fresh and frequent and he likes to find the body before the man across the street gets around to it. He even writes to authors and asks how long he has to wait for the next one.

The addict runs true to form wherever you find him. He is a split personality who tries to replace the heads of flowers he has accidentally mowed down and he loves to scare himself to death several nights a week after

dinner. If he can convert the rest of the family to his way of life he is entirely happy. It's nice to watch somebody else turn on more lights, call for a shawl, and try to walk upstairs backward.

It takes a lot of books to keep such people adequately chilled. Somebody has to stop reading for a while and take up writing instead. Like nine out of ten addicts I thought I could write one too. I thought it would be something like reading, and oddly enough, it is.

The detective novel writer can have legitimate fun these days because the style in double-dealing has changed and the fiend in human form looks more and more like somebody you went to school with. Flesh-and-blood killers always have looked like that but it used to be bad form to say so in print. The old-time killer, to be acceptable, had to be a man with features so openly evil that when he went out to buy a paper a child living in the next county would wake up screaming. He had to live in a restricted neighborhood, too, restricted to him and his kind. No semi-detached villas with lilacs around the door for that one. You found him in a hovel or a mountainside, in a big, dark house, or in a widow's lodgings. He was friendly with bats, familiar with chemistry, and he could hold long conversations with the dead if he felt like it. If he felt like it he could bring them back. And when he wasn't a man he was, of course, a woman. Not a womanly woman but a cold, silent creature with very white skin. No heart, naturally, and no blood because that was all in the little test tubes.

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No shortage in that either if you knew where to go for more.

The writers of that creeping school knew perfectly well that Lizzie Borden, Dr. Crippen, Constance Kent, and G. J. Smith were nice-looking people with pleasant manners, but they also knew their readers. Their readers didn't want to believe anything like that. They didn't want to laugh at an old lady character who talked like Aunt Hattie in a pet, only to discover on the last page that she was the one who ground the glass with the coffee. They wanted to be frightened stiff by someone they could put their fingers on at once, like a man with a hawk face or a webbed foot. But that school of writing has slunk away and that kind of reader has slunk along with it. It's hard to say which made the first move. Probably everybody grew up. Only one thing remains unchanged and that's the old-style wages of sin. It's still death.

NO matter how the change came about, its wonderful for everybody. Today's writer doesn't have to apologize for his work because his tongue is out of his cheek, and today's reader likes to have his suspicions about Aunt Hattie verified. He also likes to meet situations and people that are more or less familiar. Finding a resemblance to yourself or your friends in a book, or thinking you do, has been a pleasant vice from "Pamela" to "The Sheik" and on up, and when the present day reader comes across a red-handed killer who shares his feeling about sugar in a Tom Collins he knows the man can't be all bad. A little touch like that makes things interesting and normal. He reads on, finding other common ground, other antics of behavior that he understands. Suppose he reads about a man who steals his friend's best girl but won't stop with that. The man brings the girl around one night when the friend hasn't shaved, and stands in the middle of the room grinning and making wisecracks. The girl grins, too. They keep it up. Well, they're asking for it and they get it, both of them, a few score pages farther on. It's too bad, the reader knows that, and it isn't what he'd do himself, but he can understand. Those grins could show up in a man's dreams and nag him all night. The reader knows. Somebody laughed at him once, years ago, and there was a girl in it, too, and if he'd had a hatchet he'd have thrown it. Or he thought he would at the time. That's the compatibility between reader and fictional character these days. The reader can follow the killer straight up to the place where the killer turns off. That's where they part, that's where the resemblance ends. The killer always forgets about

those bad, old wages, fixed for all time. He has to forget. Better for everybody if he isn't too natural.

The resemblance of the murderer to ordinary people, plus more careful writing, is the detective novel's best step forward. The characters make as much sense as possible under the circumstances, and if the killer is a crackpot and tries to hide it, why not? The detective can be a man or woman of any age and appearance, always bright, always good-hearted, always willing to wait until the final murder before he can bring himself to admit that a fellow creature is a stinker. The settings are fairly normal, the dialogue can actually be read out loud, and the killer doesn't announce himself and his plans with a thin scream. It is, as millions of people are finding out, the perfect escape literature and it manages to be very moral at the same time. Nobody ever gets away with anything.

Some experts even say the detective novel is good for people. That sounds high falutin but they don't mean it that way. They only mean that trying to figure whodunit is better than no figuring at all. And when the writer poses a little problem in sociology, which is getting to be a fairly common trick, that's very good indeed. A sneaking sympathy for a character trapped into killing by fear or ridicule is much nicer than wondering about the man in the other kind of escape literature, I mean the man who knows how to keep two apartments going. Not many of us have the emotional or financial equipment for two apartments, but almost all of us have wanted, at least once, to kick somebody downstairs fatally. The detective novel provides an outlet for all that. Anyone who ever rode the plains with Custer or fell off the piano stool with Elsie Dinsmore knows what I mean. It's good to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds a couple of nights a week if you feel like it, and no apologies are necessary. It's a lot healthier than your parents' pastime of patting themselves on the back because they didn't have a webbed foot.

I think the reader gets the credit for all improvements in the detective novel. When he got tired of automatons, the writer had to move along with him or starve. But whatever the reason, the werewolves are gone and the crime story is keeping in step with all the other advances. Some people won't be surprised if it steps right out in front of everybody one of these days and gets a decoration. It may be a small one, the kind they keep to the end of the program and give to the child who has made the most improvement during the year. That will be fun, too.

I don't know why I keep talking about fun but it's the right word. Detective novels are fun to read and fun to write. When you write, everything you see can be turned into something and almost everything that happens can be used. Somebody comes into your room, for instance, puts a cold hand on your cheek, and laughs when you jump. The hand is cold because the furnace went out and the kindling was in the backyard shed. That's all. That's the truth. . . . But is it? Hasn't the one with the cold little hand been laughing too much lately? Ever since that corporal from Camp Meade stood her up? She had a new dress for that dance, too, and the other kids thought it was a scream the way she sat by the front door and waited for the bell to ring. Wait a minute. Didn't somebody say the corporal showed up last night to apologize or something? Last night when the rest of us had gone to the movies? Didn't the man next door say he saw him walking up the path? *She* didn't say anything. *She* said she went to bed early and slept like a top. . . . I wonder if metal buttons burn?

See? Everything can be used, even your lovable old grandfather. He wears spats in August to keep off the mosquitoes. It embarrasses the family but he won't stop. Well now, suppose grandfather can't find his buttonhook one morning and goes over to the girls' room to borrow a bobby pin. He looks out of the girls' window and sees smoke coming from the chimney of the house next door. Smoke in August? Maybe they have mosquitoes, too. He forgets all about it until three days later when the man from next door appears with a long face and says his wife has been missing for three days and he hates to think something may have happened to her. No

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research into the Black Mass, just an old retired preacher with odd habits that will be thoroughly understood by every woman over sixty who belongs to a lending library.

It's fun to work in a little learning, too. Keats and Donne are exactly right for softening up a character, and a good percentage of your readers will think you went to school longer than you did. And then there's the weather. Some readers like to start out in a literal fog, preferably in London, but, if you don't know London well enough to risk that, New York is just as good. Over by the river, either river; rain or fog. You drop into a bar to get warm and dry and hope something will happen. A man comes in and asks if his wife has telephoned. Normal behavior. She hasn't. Abnormal. That's yours, you take it over from there. You make the man worried instead of gratified, so worried that he telephones his house. There's no answer. "That's funny," he says to everybody within hearing, "that's very funny. I'd better get along and see what's up. It's six o'clock. It's six o'clock by that big clock on the wall and she ought to be getting dinner. Yes, it's six o'clock and it takes me twenty minutes to get home from here. Well, I'll be going." . . . He won't get away with it because the interne from Bellevue will know right away that she's been dead fifty minutes.

All this makes the writing sound too easy and it isn't. But easy or not, it's a lovely way to make money; and there's no ban on quality if you want to try for that, too. Trying for quality might be called reaching for Dorothy Sayers.

A long time ago I read something that Dorothy Sayers quoted: "It is later than you think." I was cold for hours afterward. Ever since, I've been trying to find something like that for myself to say. I haven't got it yet, but I came close to it once. One warm, bright afternoon I heard something strike against my ground floor window. It was a very small bird, too young to fly, too young to do anything but lie in my hand and quiver. I didn't know where it came from, we had no trees, but I knew where it was going—over to a private park nearby where the bushes were safe and thick. I wrapped it in a handkerchief and started out. On my way I stopped to show it to the woman from whom I bought newspapers. She was a big, bold woman with a reputation for talking back to the clergy. I raised a corner of the handkerchief and showed her what I had. She backed away, slowly. I swear a cloud came over the sun. Her voice was low and quiet when she said, "Are you sure it's a bird?"

Brrr?

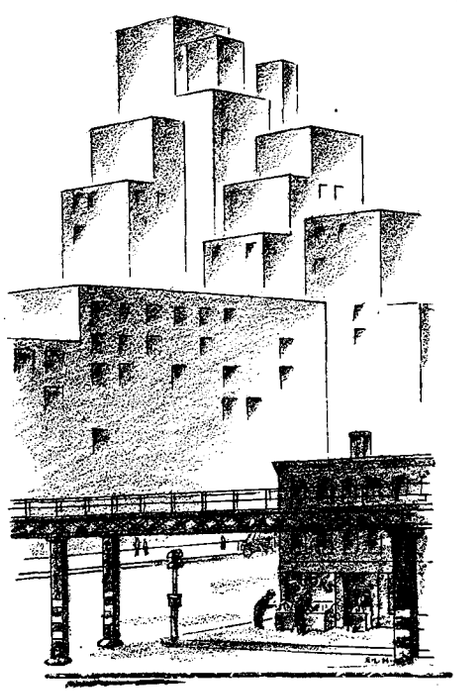
Relentless Recital of Americana

LOWER THAN ANGELS. By Walter Karig. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1945. 375 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

"LOWER THAN ANGELS" is a "take-it-or-leave-it" first novel. The reader will either admire the author for his courage and industry in writing it, or he will find it so depressing a chunk of early twentieth-century Americana that he will be unwilling to give it house-room. It is hard to imagine anyone who finishes it being half-hearted about it. But if you start reading it, you will find it as painfully fascinating as a sore tooth and as difficult to leave alone. The author must have had more than the courage of perseverance. Unless he was heedless of the currents of American thought about our young manhood in the midst of the war in which we are now engaged, he could not have written the life story of the son of a Staten Island delicatessen dealer who was thrust stern first and protesting into the First World War. Nor would he have inferred in a final chapter dated 1944 that not much had happened to improve American youth in the next quarter of a century.

Mr. Karig might say about his first novel what James Farrell has written of his own work, "If there is any hatred in my books, it is not directed against people but against conditions which brutalize human beings and produce spiritual and material poverty." Like Farrell's novels, this is not a satire nor has Mr. Karig editorialized about the conditions that produced Marvin Lang. Wisely, he has kept his own opinions out of sight. The reader first comes across a wretched little boy in a mean little house in New York in the year 1900. Six years later Grandpa Lang dies, and Grandma moves downstairs to Marvin's bed. From then until the family sells the house and moves away, Marvin sleeps wherever he can find room. By the time he is eleven he had been to Prospect Park four or five times, to Coney Island three times, to Greenwood Cemetery on several Decoration Days, to the Zoo and the Aquarium once. He had learned about sex and was consequently ashamed of his father and mother. Nothing he had found out in school or in the church basement made any sense to him.



The Langs had to pinch pennies, but they were not poor in the manner of Farrell's Irish hoodlums. It was worse than that; a gray, spiritless blight on their lives that came from fear of losing what they had and of descending into the lower depths. The only moment recorded when the family had any fun together was on the night when Marvin helped his father and mother stock the little delicatessen store on the ground floor of the Staten Island house with debt laden goods. Marvin finally gets through the eighth grade of school and becomes a butcher, then, when the war breaks out, a worker with silk shirts and an automobile bought on the installment plan and promptly returned via the sheriff whence it came, leaving Papa to pay the bill. By the time the Army gets him, Marvin is a moral coward, a cheap egotist; and what he thinks about the girls he meets has to be left to the reader's imagination. In fact, he is a thorough son of anything you want to mention. In the Army he butchers for an outfit guarding a reservoir and gets out of uniform when his father dies. He is carrying on with two girls when he contracts a social disease from a prostitute. The doctor, understandably, tells him to keep away from the delicatessen. He marries the only decent girl in the book, the daughter of a thrifty and calculating Norwegian who thus takes over the store and gets Marvin free as his clerk. Marvin finally dies in 1944 from an explosion of a few gallons of bootleg gas, and his son Carl returns from today's war in uniform to take over the store and apparently to go on producing further editions of Marvin Lang.

Mr. Karig's relentless recital leaves out very little except humor, though it is grimly ironic at times; when, for example, Marvin sees the crepe tied on the doorknob of the house and

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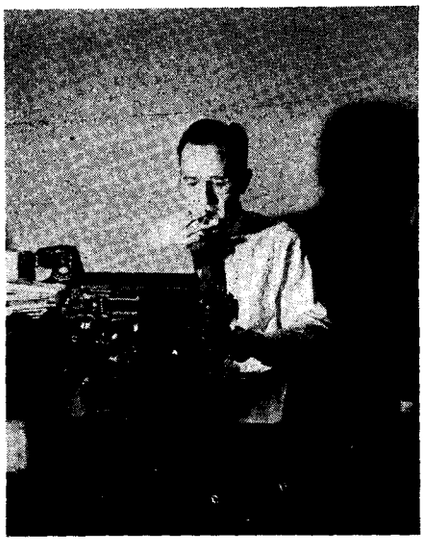
thinks that it is grandfather's corpse hanging there, or later, when he falls in love, for the only time in the book, with an amorous little wench who is shrewd enough to leave him flat, or when the munitions plant throws him out without his suit or wages because he is too yellow to be a scab.

It would be too easy to say that Mr. Karig might have called his novel "Lower Than the Animals," for no feather of an angel's wing touches this book; or that it is a return to the post-war novel of a decade or more ago when any kind of American life, from farm to city, was painted as inescapably dreary and ugly. What gives "Lower Than the Angels" its compelling fascination is a kind of dull rage at Marvin that the reader may fall into, and an interest in the little details of running a pathetic little food store in an unlovely small town. You want to find out what is going to happen to Marvin's mother who hoped he would always be a little gentleman, to his father who has tried and failed to give life some shred of dignity in the face of mounting debts, and to Marvin himself, who never gets his just desserts. The reader's absorption in the novel is not accidental; it comes from Mr. Karig's ability to create living human beings in this sub-stratum of life and to make you smell the delicatessen store and see the mean streets around it. His over-sexed and scheming adolescent girls are another accomplishment of a writer who, now that he has gotten Marvin out of his system, may go far. [Mr. Karig is the first new writer of 1945 for whom it is worth while to send up a Roman candle.] It remains to be said that his publisher's description of the book is completely inadequate, for it is certainly not "a classic in that rare and most enjoyable art—the magic creation of nostalgia." It is about as nostalgic as an old penitentiary. The publisher's last six words are correct, however. "It is a very good book."



Carlton Brown

Method in Mike's Madness

BRAINSTORM. By Carlton Brown. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1944. 302 *pp.* $2.75

Reviewed by SARA HOLDEN

THE preface to this unusual and engrossing book states:

> This is a true story. It is about a close friend of the author's who went out of his mind and spent two months in a city and a state asylum. He recovered without treatment and retained a vivid memory of every strange flight his fancy took during his journey through mania. He is a writer, but he could not write the story himself. He had copious notes which he had made in the state hospital and afterwards, copies of letters to and from friends and relatives and pages of description and self-catechism that he had written following the experience.
> Carlton Brown, by means of this material and from long talks with Michael Kelly Jones, as the hero, or rather the victim, of "Brainstorm" is called, put together this proxy autobiography. And it is a fascinating and almost first-hand account of mental aberration.

Mike Jones was born in 1912, and was a typical "flaming youth." He came of a broken and unhappy family and during his boyhood was torn between a compulsive loyalty to his mother and a guilt-ridden liking for his father's, and his father's second wife's, luxurious and colorful life in Rio and Europe. Young Mike and his sister were swapped around between the two families, and both turned into thoroughly unsettled and amoral young people. Mike's teen-age years were promiscuous and irresponsible, his young manhood saw no improvement. No doubt it was all building up to his eventual breakdown. He was talented, but without integrity or self-discipline; he had numerous *affaires d'amour* and he attempted suicide at least once; he finally married, while drunk, a girl whom he had "accidentally" slept with and the marriage dragged along until the summer of 1940 when his behavior and his delusions at length became violent enough to make his incarceration necessary. Mike was a manic-depressive, and his elated period took the form of a Messiah complex. When he sought to prove his Messiahship at one of the gates to the World's Fair, he was carted away to the city hospital.

Carlton Brown's transcription of Mike's detailed recollections of his fantasy, and of his behavior and emotions both before he was "put away" and during his stay at the asylums, is a remarkable document because it is so immediate and terrifyingly intimate an account of a mind gone astray. It is harrowing and occasionally very funny and always, underneath, terribly sad. Mr. Brown has made this proxy autobiography both convincing and engrossing. One of the strange things about the book is that, from a character at first completely unlikable and unsympathetic to the reader, Mike Jones gradually becomes both likable and pathetic, and in his gropings toward sanity exhibits qualities of integrity and balance which make him, after his release from the institutions, appear to have become a much better person than he was in all the years before. If a mental breakdown can do that for a person, there's something to be said for the method! Mike's illness was a self-determining one, but he actually had to pull himself out of it by his bootstraps. He had no treatment to speak of, and very little psychiatric aid. One of the most poignant parts of the book is his struggle with the inevitable black depression, the backswing of the pendulum.

If, as is claimed, "Brainstorm" is a true story, Carlton Brown is a master at interpreting, editing, and rewriting another man's experience. If the treatment is a literary device, he is a brilliant, imaginative writer, with insight and sympathy and extraordinary skill at creating a human personality in the grip of fantasy. In either event, the book is a credit to him, and marks the debut of a writer worth watching.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 87

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer to No. 87 will be found in the next issue.

BQHSHBHRL HR Z RSTCX AX

VGHBG LDM FQNV HLONQSZMS

ZMC ENQLHCZAKD ZS UDQX

RLZKK DWODMRD.

—CNBSNQ INGMRNM.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 86

IF POOR MEN CANNOT ALWAYS GET MEAT, RICH MEN CANNOT ALWAYS DIGEST IT.

—HENRY GILES.

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VERDICT FOR WHOM?

IN the past few years, several books have criticized the attempt of the Western world to dominate the Orient—Quaritch Wales's "Years of Blindness," General Carlos P. Romulo's "Mother America," Edgar Snow's "Red Star Over China" and later his "The Battle for Asia." They have championed the desire and the right of the Asiatic peoples to command their own destinies. When the attitude of the world swings to the East with Germany's defeat, the problem of imperialism, economic or political, will become a burning issue.

Most Americans today who have given any thought to the question are anti-imperialist. We have had the good fortune to have taken over a vast and empty continent, and so, not having to worry about supporting ourselves at the expense of other peoples, we are perhaps inclined to believe that the quicker the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French, the Belgians, the Spanish (and so forth), and the British, give up trying to rule the brown, black, and yellow people thousands of miles away from them, the better it will be for them and the whole world. But at the same time we are informed that if the "white" folk (who turn out to be not so white when the sociologist gets to work on them) let go of these chromatic natives in Asia, Africa, or the East Indies, they will burst into fragments and have bloody revolutions which will annoy us whites for a long time and cause us to lose our markets.

If you belonged to an island off the coast of Europe, with a population today of some forty-eight million people, about the same number as live on the Island of Java, you might be cool to the desire for freedom of any colored race on the other side of the world. You might thank your lucky stars that you had all those darker folks to work for you in one way or another. You wouldn't go out of your way to insult them since they labor from dawn to dark. Or would you?

Well, yes, you would! Or at least it must have been considered good policy by the British recently to allow Mr. Beverley Nichols to spend a year of physical and spiritual suffering in India so he could emerge with a book. His "Verdict on India" has been somewhat neglected by most of the American press as, I presume, "too hot to handle," but it deserves our attention. There has been only one other on the same subject in recent times that approached it in savagery and malice, Katherine Mayo's "Mother India," written twenty years ago, which Mr. Nichols quotes at length. Nobody was, theoretically, interested in India in those days but it sold several hundreds of thousands of copies, including reprints, and was a sensational success in Great Britain. In a way, it deserved this success. However wildly it traduced the people of India, it was written with the deepest sincerity and the most passionate conviction. Its author was a well-to-do maiden lady who had crusaded for "causes" in this country; a woman who was so ardent an Anglophile that she deplored the fact that we did not have Dukes and Lords and other titles in this country, and regretted that we had even been so deluded as to have a revolution that destroyed our connection with the British Crown. Katherine Mayo went to India with the blessings of the British government, or its India Office. Her Rolls Royce was transported from America to India, she was shown everything that could inflame the susceptibilities of a virtuous old maid, and presented with examples of everything that could arouse her ardor for a British cause. She said a great many things that were true about the work of the Britisher in the India Civil Service, the public workers living an exhausting and nerve wracking life in a horrible climate and among apparently irresponsible natives. She hated the Hindus, their religion, sexual habits, and child marriages. In one sense the work blew up in the British Government's face; it so disturbed the prosperous middle class in England that I have been told that a great sum had to be spent on hospitals and clinics for women that might have been saved for more imperial causes.

But to return to Beverley Nichols and his "Verdict on India." When he went to India there were still thousands of the leaders of India in jail, and many of them are still there, including one of the greatest statesmen in the world, Nehru. He found a sullen hatred of the white man everywhere. He was violently attacked by the Indian press for being what he appears to be from this book; in turn, he has labeled the Indian press the most venal in the world. He found nothing praiseworthy in Indian art, music, medicine, religion, politics, or the theatre. He thought their imprisoned saint, Gandhi, a Fascist. He, too, hated the Hindu; but this esthete who wrote of himself once, "I am always posing," is no zealot like Miss Mayo, who would have been willing to be grilled alive for a cause she believed in. Mr. Nichols was acutely uncomfortable in India, and I dare say got prickly heat even in the Viceroy's incredible marble palace. But he has done his work superbly. As a result of "Verdict on India," there may be, sad to say, a few thousands of Americans who, when the test comes, and when the conscience of the world looks hard some day at India's revolution, will say, "I know that dreadful country; it is not worth the freedom it is crying for."

So far as Americans are concerned, the whole question is one requiring continuing information and continuing tact. While we are in no position to dictate the political complexion of the entire world, we can't help thinking. Nor should we. H. S.

Ode

By Raymond Rosenthal

NOW life's great fault is found
Body broken, come to ground.
Heart sends the head, traveling darkwards,
Image-bound, fused in fears,
The mouth without its words,
The eyes without tears.
Tell us, is the circuit of the pouring blood,
Beat upon beat, but for this wasting flood?
O hold his head, he's done, done,
Hard-fallen, dark-gone, alone.
O remember when the night, fold on fold, comes softly down,
The swing of his shoulders, his soft word, and the swift bird
Of his laughter. Before he's buried death-cold
Remember his young stride in the streets of the town.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Translator Replies

SIR: Mr. F. C. Weiskopf wrote with characteristic generosity of my version of Bertolt Brecht's "The Private Life of the Master Race." I tremble before critics who know the German original, for I was always aware that I could not reproduce its character in English; but I felt that an American public should know Brecht even in disguise. If such linguists as Mr. Weiskopf can read the English version with pleasure that is a finer compliment than I ever dared to expect.

I was shocked, however, to learn from Mr. Weiskopf's review that I seem to have disparaged all other refugee writers in order to praise Brecht. I must have chosen my words very ill. What I meant to maintain was that, while there are many gifted refugee writers, including Mr. Weiskopf himself, Brecht is almost alone in writing the inner history of the refugee. Many write literature *in* exile; Brecht writes the literature *of* exile. I admit that this is to question the merit of certain books, such as Anna Seghers's "Transit." But I was thinking chiefly of poetry. In this field I paid tribute also to Berthold Viertel; and in a rather long review currently appearing in *The New Republic* I speak well of Max Herrmann and Walter Mehring. The more I read of these men, however, and of Becher and the others mentioned by Mr. Weiskopf, the more I feel that Brecht is most nearly equal to the task of writing the poetry of exile in these confused and desperate days. Only a Heine, perhaps only a Shakespeare, could be *fully* equal to it.

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY.
University of Minnesota.

Charlemagne and Aachen

SIR: In connection with Aachen at this time the following historical note, quoted by Burton from Petrarch, may be of interest.

Charlemagne "foolishly doted upon a woman of mean favor and condition, many years together, wholly delighting in her company, to the great grief and indignation of his friends and followers. When she was dead, he did embrace her corpse, as Apollo did the bay-tree for his Daphne, and caused her coffin (richly embalmed and decked with jewels) to be carried about with him, over which he still lamented. At last a venerable bishop, that followed his court, prayed earnestly to God (commiserating his lord and master's case) to know the true cause of his mad passion, and whence it proceeded; it was revealed to him, in fine, 'that the cause of the emperor's mad love lay under the dead woman's tongue.' The bishop went hastily to the carcass, and took a small ring thence; upon the removal the emperor abhorred the corpse, and, instead of it fell as furiously in love with the bishop, he would not suffer him to be out of his presence; which when the bishop perceived, he flung the ring into the midst of a great lake, where the king then was. From that hour the emperor neglected all his other houses, dwelt at (Aachen), built a fair house in the midst of the marsh, to his infinite expense, and a temple by it where after he was buried, and in which city all his posterity ever since used to be crowned."

W. C. ROSE.
Ashland, Mass.

"Of course it's not under 'fingers' . . . try under 'cuts.'"

The Disappearing B. A.

SIR: Where is the book agent? Like Horse Sense, he has gone with the horses! When I knew him he was as plentiful as gardenweeds and just as popular. Originally he was a peddler with a pack on his back—boarded on crackers and cheese or thumbed occasional meals from a kindly farm wife whom he induced to subscribe for a copy of "Huckleberry Finn" @ $3. When he returned to deliver it, he got another free meal. Sometimes he rode in the stage—to the next town. As he prospered, he hired a horse and buggy—he could cover more ground—got more samples sheep bound in marble edges. Over the long years, he became adept—used good language—sometimes read the book he sold—and in due time, became a lecturer—perhaps a preacher, then graduated to school teaching, printing, and publishing.

He is now *The New York Times Book Review* and *The Saturday Review of Literature!* Great was the book agent; he was a power in the building of America—as his silent successors are the power that keeps her Real America.

M. I. MCCREIGHT.
New York, N. Y.

Materialism and Reaction

SIR: I agree with Francis J. Lally (*SRL* December 30th) that *The Saturday Review* is no place for religious polemics; but since he has introduced the subject I cannot let it go unchallenged.

It would be amusing, if it were not so annoying, to have an adherent of the most reactionary school of thought on earth call materialism reactionary. For the opportunity to do so I blame the atavistic obscurantism of a few scientists (*e. g.*, Jeans, Eddington, Carrel, Millikan), who, not content to be great authorities in their own fields, take it upon themselves to play the pundit in other fields in which they have no qualifications. It is they who have spread abroad the impression that materialistic theory has not advanced beyond its status in the nineteenth century.

Mr. North is completely right. It is science, and science alone, which will save civilization from the corrosive effects of cultural lag. When we are truly civilized, we shall not need to be told, because it will be self-evident, that charms, dream-books, potions, elixirs, "Quo Vadis," "The Song of Bernadette," Lourdes—yes, and the beliefs of St. Augustine and Newman too—all belong together in the category of supernaturalism, which is only a polite name for superstition.

MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD.
San Francisco 2, Cal.

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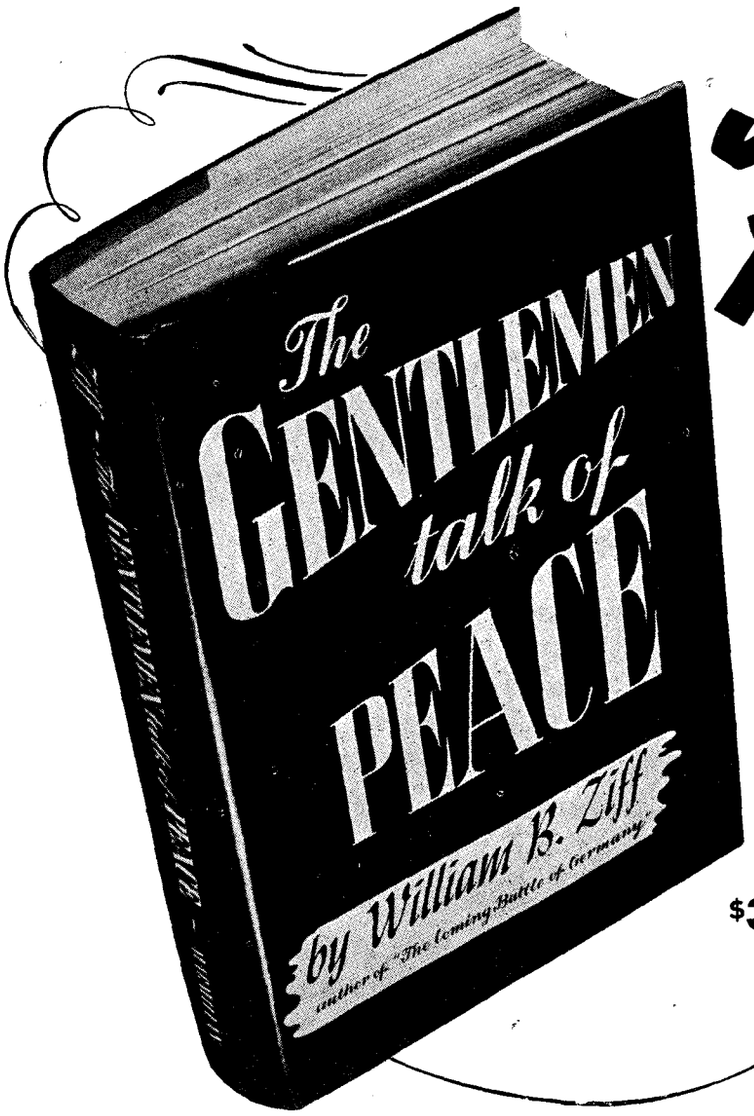

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"It is an extraordinarily clear and realistic picture of the world as it is rather than as many people hope it might be. It seemed to me that Mr. Ziff's analysis of the sources of power and of the possibility of future clashes between nations is masterly. And his solution of the world problem, though a radical one, is nevertheless worth the earnest consideration of every intelligent and open-minded citizen."—CASS CANFIELD, *President, Harper & Bros.*

"Should be read by every American who is interested in the future of his nation." — ROBERT CRATER, *Columbus (Ohio) Citizen*

•

"The author, who wrote THE COMING BATTLE OF GERMANY in 1942, now comes forward with an equally timely and important book concerning the coming peace negotiations." — *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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AGAIN WILLIAM B. ZIFF displays the extraordinary gift of accurate, uncanny vision that made his previous best seller, *The Coming Battle of Germany,* one of the most widely discussed and consulted books of its time. The present volume, *The Gentlemen Talk of Peace,* was completed last summer after two years of intensive work. The product of a lifetime of study, it is rapidly winning national acclaim as a fundamental text on the crucial problems of peace. Though packed with important, solid information, this is an exciting and breathtaking book. It takes you behind the scenes to show you the facts and logic which will create the headlines of tomorrow. Here is a forewarning and a forearming for everyone who deludes himself with the notion that the fervent hope of peace is enough to ensure the fact of peace.

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"THE GENTLEMEN TALK OF PEACE is one of the great books of our time. It will continue to grow in stature as the years reveal the scope of its uncanny penetration into the realm of present day imponderables." — SENATOR EDWIN C. JOHNSON, *Colorado, Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Military Affairs*

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"This is an exciting and controversial book. With complete realism an analysis is given of each of the major countries and the situation in which it finds itself as the war draws to a close. The reader is given an overall picture of the world of today, with the contradictions and dangers it holds for the peace of tomorrow. Regardless of our disagreement (or agreement) with Mr. Ziff's foreboding portrayal of world chaos to come, we must hail his bold and original attack on the present way our world is being betrayed by the gentlemen who talk of peace."—CLARK LARRABEE, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

"If Americans wish to understand the complex ramifications of the present international crisis, they would do well to read William B. Ziff's recently issued book, THE GENTLEMEN TALK OF PEACE. This monumental work on the nature of war and peace with its brilliant analysis of the situation today, gives a remarkably clear picture of the world in which we live. It might well be required reading for all Americans." — SENATOR OWEN BREWSTER, *in speech before New York Bar Association*

"Of the many books written on peace this one is certainly one of the most comprehensive and stimulating. Mr. Ziff's realistic volume should be read by all those who wish to go beyond platitudes concerning the complex problem of peace." — PROF. GEORGE B. DE HUSZAR, *University of Chicago*

"Here are the answers to many of the questions which you and I oversimplify when we talk about winning the peace. Indeed, on the evidence adduced in this book, the winning of the peace is going to be more of a struggle than winning the war." — WILBUR D. DUNKEL, *Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat & Chronicle*

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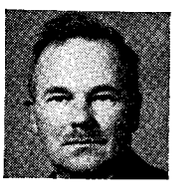
"One cannnot read it without thinking, without realizing some of the magnitude of the problems before us, something of the great task which yet remains to be done. For Mr. Ziff, there is no easy way to peace; and it is well that someone with powers of clear thought had made that plain to us."—*Halifax, N.S. Star*

"Here is one of the most extraordinary and penetrating books yet to appear in the evergrowing library devoted to the political and economic ills of mankind and how they may be cured in the postwar world . . . Mr. Ziff's volume is extraordinary in the vast wealth of historical, geographical, military and technical material he has assembled in the space of one book. It is penetrating in that it throws a searchlight on the weak spots of many currently suggested Utopias. And his own solution of the great postwar enigma is [illegible] in its scope and daring . . . The main value of the book . . . is the detailed picture it presents of the world today and the problems that vex it. This reviewer knows of no other volume that approaches it in doing that very worthwhile job."—JOSEPH H. BAIRD, *Washington Star*

"This is an important book. It puts the problem of peacemaking on the level on which it belongs, beyond the discussion of grandiose blueprints, ingenious gadgets of peace machinery and diplomatic shadow-boxing, into the very midst of the complex and dynamic forces of our international society... It is written with that cold-blooded realism and sweeping punch in style which made Ziff's earlier 'Coming Battle of Germany' a best seller. It is a sincere book, radical in the truest sense, going to the roots of the present conflict . . . It will certainly arouse the experts. It must also stir up a wide public, awake to the issues of tomorrow."—PROF. SIGMUND NEUMANN, *Dept. of Govt., Weslevan Univ., in the N. Y. Times Book Section*



"He draws a picture of the world as it is that for sheer realism has few equals."—ALDEN HOAG, *Boston Herald Traveler*

"This book will outlive our time."—HANS HEYMANN, *Professor of Economics, Rutgers University; former economic adviser to the German (Weimar) Republic*

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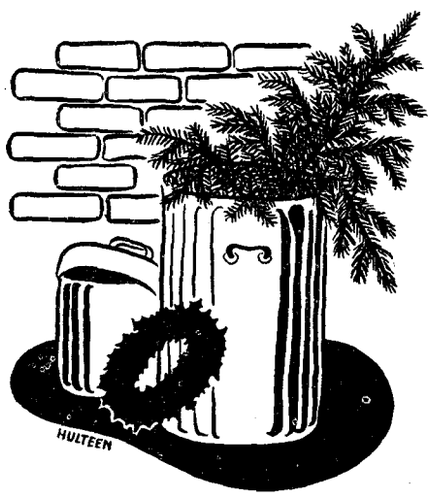
TRADE Winds

WHEN HENRY HOYNS, chairman of the board of Harper and Brothers, died on January 23, at the age of seventy-six, there died with him the last and, in many ways the finest vestige of a publishing era whose like will never be seen again. Henry Hoyns had been a cog in the Harper machine for sixty-one years, beginning at the very bottom, and rising in true Horatio Alger fashion by sheer merit and perseverence to a position of eminence and respect unique in the entire book world. To the last he was a man who believed in old-fashioned dignity, precision, integrity, and attention to detail. Not for him the flamboyant publicity tricks of the forties or the dangerous philosophy of "What's the difference how much it costs? The Government is paying ninety per cent of it anyhow!" One morning in November, 1944, he okayed, in twenty minutes, a publishing venture for Harper's that involved a quarter of a million dollars, and immediately thereafter disappeared into his private office with a Midwestern salesman to check over an expense account. The salesman swears that Henry told him "No luncheon in Des Moines could possibly have cost you three seventy unless you had two portions of dessert!"

A few years ago the Harper sales staff tendered Henry a dinner, and presented him with a red pencil four feet long to "help him check accounts." He laughed with all the rest because he knew and they knew that he could no more help this habit than a greyhound could help chasing an electric rabbit. Hoyns probably never turned down a request for a personal loan in his life, and tears come to the eyes of his associates when they recall some of his generous, almost quixotic, actions in really important decisions. It was the petty, unimportant items—like that Des Moines lunch check—that he simply could not allow to go unchallenged. He had had to watch pennies when he was a boy, and he could never forget his early training. As a matter of fact, it stood the house of Harper in good stead during the early days of the century, when the going was difficult. The firm's impregnable position today is due in no small measure to his zealous and never-failing guardianship of the exchequer.



Henry Hoyns was born on an Illinois farm in 1868. The family moved to New York when he was two, and here he stayed for the rest of his life. His last twenty-five years he lived in Brooklyn; the success of his book about that tree was the crowning satisfaction of his career. The official account declares that Horatio Harper first noticed Henry when he was fifteen, working on a Sound steamer. That is not the story Henry told me at luncheon one day at his club. He swore that he was working as a bootblack on a Staten Island ferry that summer to earn a little vacation money when Mr. Harper, impressed by his earnestness and hustle, offered him a job in the "pick-up" order room of the publishing house in Franklin Square. Maybe Henry was borrowing a few details from one of the innumerable success stories he published later, but that's how he professed to remember it. Later he decided that he didn't want a story about himself printed after all. "They don't want to hear about an old-timer like me," he insisted. "Write about the young fellows instead." "What young fellows?" I asked. "Oh, Cass Canfield or Adam Burger," he answered. "Adam gets the credit for anything funny I ever say anyhow."

When World War One began, Henry Hoyns had risen to the sales manager's post. His greatest single coup was a contract with Sears, Roebuck for a million copies of "Ben Hur." "They kicked like steers," said Henry, "but they wanted that title in their catalogue, and I wouldn't settle for anything less. What's more, they sold every one of the million eventually." He refused to say how long that took.

The friends Henry made during those days on the road were the friends he loved best in 1944. His death breaks up a golf twosome with Ed Ketcham of Grosset and Dunlap that hacked its way through the rough of courses from Garden City to Del Monte. In 1918, he was elected vice-president of Harper's; in 1929, he became president. Tom Wells retired as chairman of the board in 1931, and Henry succeeded him. At the time of his death, he was just preparing to pinch hit for Cass Canfield, who is off to head the Paris bureau of the O.W.I. Now Canfield becomes chairman of the Harper board, and Frank MacGregor succeeds to the presidency. Harper's occupies far too important a position in the publishing world to waver even momentarily at the loss of one man, but it will be many years before everybody connected with the firm ceases to mourn dearly loved and respected Henry Hoyns.

Henry Hoyns

I'd like to conclude this affectionate farewell with an anecdote that highlights Henry Hoyns's instinctive zeal for driving the best possible bargain for his firm. Henry handled the reprint department, and considered a day wasted when he couldn't up a reprint publisher's guarantee to a point just a wee bit higher than circumstances warranted. Van Cartmell offered him a twenty-five-hundred-dollar advance one day for a current novel. Henry leafed through his records and said, "It's far too early for a reprint, Van. That book is still selling eight hundred copies a week in the original edition." Van recognized this as the accepted Hoyns opening move in such negotiations, and upped his bid to four thousand. Henry allowed himself to be persuaded—against his better judgment, he explained—and went out to get a contract form. He was somewhat abashed when he returned, and suggested to Van that he would appreciate the expunging of the entire affair from the records. The book in

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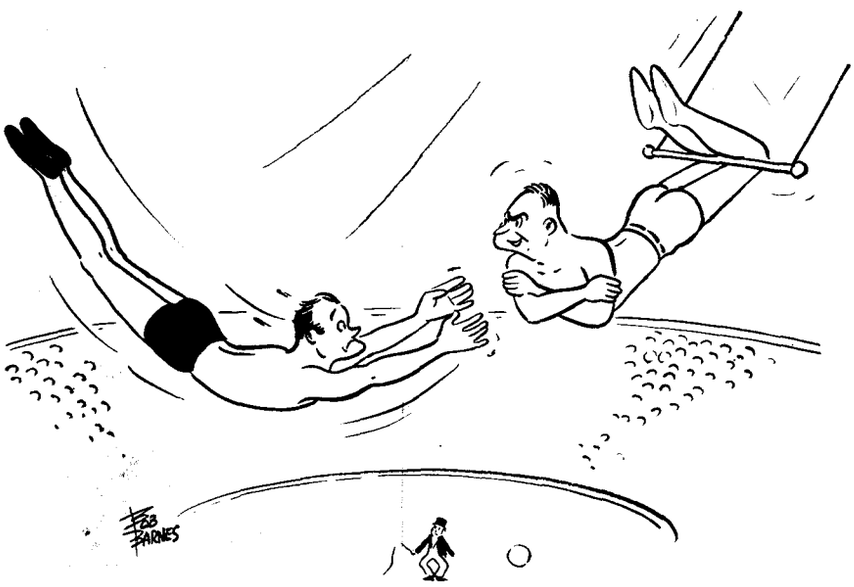

"How about that five bucks you borrowed?"

question, it turned out, was a Scribner publication. . . .

EDGAR SNOW, author of the Council on Books in Wartime's new "Imperative" book, "People on Our Side," is home from Moscow, with the almost completed manuscript of a new volume called "Russia Invades Europe." Random House will publish it in late spring. One of Snow's last stops abroad was Lublin, site of the Nazis' infamous murder camp of Maidanek. There is a certain grim fascination in his report that, when the Lublin Medical College reopened, the first item ordered from Moscow, to be sent to this spot where hundreds of thousands of victims had been massacred so short a time before, was twenty skeletons! . . . Moss Hart, preparing to tour the South Pacific foxhole circuit in his own "The Man Who Came to Dinner," is growing a beard for the purpose. His brother Bernie, encountering him unexpectedly when the whiskers were a mere four-inch bristle, recoiled in horror and exclaimed, "You couldn't have been born. You were trapped!" . . . Lincoln was once asked by a New York firm for information on the financial condition of one of his neighbors. He obliged with the following: "Yours of 10th instant received. I am well acquainted with Mr. ———, and know his circumstances. First of all, he has a wife and baby; together, they ought to be worth $50,000 to any man. Secondly, he has an office in which there is a table worth $1.50, and three chairs, worth, say $1. Last of all, there is in one corner a large rat-hole which will bear looking into. Respectfully yours, A. Lincoln."

CHARLES MORTON, of *The Atlantic Monthly,* cherishes a cartoon from the *Chicago Tribune.* It shows a vigilant, sturdy dog of impressive dimensions, labeled *"Chicago Tribune,"* gazing scornfully at some mangy pups identified variously as *"Collier's," "Saturday Review of Literature," "Atlantic,"* etc. The one cringing in the foreground is marked "Communist Press." The cartoon is entitled "Freedom of the Press." "It's a free country," says Morton, "and if the *Chicago Tribune* wants to think of itself as a dog, that's all right with us. We cannot help remarking, however, that at this particular stage of the war, the *Tribune* depicts itself as a *German shepherd."* . . . *Tide* reports that the "Plaza Circle" hotels (the Plaza, Pierre, Savoy-Plaza, and Sherry-Netherland) are planning a joint advertising campaign. I'd settle for an explanation of why Cesar, long the major-domo of the Plaza Oak Room, has vanished from his old haunts. The many book publishers who foregather there miss him. . . .

A BERIBBONED COLONEL, celebrating his leave at the Stork Club the other night, told about a wonderful incident that occurred at the Washington airport recently. An Iranian Air Mission flew in for a series of informal discussions about the post-war aviation set-up. The Iranian ministry sent a high dignitary to greet his countrymen, of course, and the Air Transport Corps was represented by Major General George. The Iranian mistook the latter for General Marshall, and so addressed him three or four times. Finally General George decided to set him right. "The name, sir," he said somewhat testily, "is *George."* The Iranian smiled happily, bowed from the waist, and responded, "Please call *me* Mohammed."

BENNETT CERF.

"Splendid spy stuff"

—BOSTON GLOBE

"Tommy Hambledon skates on thin ice through some hazardous episodes. Well written, cleverly plotted, shrewdly developed spy adventure. Both thrilling and entertaining."
—*Chicago Sunday Tribune*

"This gay spy story stands head and shoulders above the current wash of espionage and mystery fiction."—*Newsweek.*

"How Tommy does a tidy bit of blasting in Berlin and then arranges to be deported by the Nazis makes a heart-warming tale of British superiority over Nazi stupidity."—*Boston Globe.*

"He keeps the reader so busy following the well-told, fast-moving sequence of his adventures that one simply has no time at all to worry about whether they could happen. One admits they did—and reads on with pleasure."—*St. Louis Globe.*

"In this day when brilliant writers are engaged in writing thrillers, and the general average is so high, to win a place in the first circle is no easy matter, but there is no doubt about Manning Coles. He is there."
—*Norfolk Ledger Dispatch*

"If any novel of espionage in this war is destined to be remembered for the next quarter of a century, it will probably be one written by Manning Coles."
—*N. Y. Post.*

GREEN HAZARD

By

MANNING COLES

At your bookseller's • *$2.00*

CRIME CLUB SELECTION

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Seeing Things

ON THE TOWN*

NO world is more conventional than the world of musical comedy. Its protocol for pleasure is usually rigid—at least in its essentials. Girls, gags, scenery, songs, separated lovers, and forgetfulness—these are the milk, dextro-maltose, sugar, and water of the formula it feeds its audiences upon in the hope of making them feel young. Even in its approach to audacity, this realm of music cues and dances is apt to be as orthodox as was one of Trollope's Cathedral Towns in its approach to piety.

The creators of this world generally assume that part of its fun is its familiarity. They would have us welcome it as a region where the accepted is the expected. If it is costly, star-studded, madly energetic, laugh-filled, or dank with sentimentality, its producers are inclined to believe they have done their duty. The more they stay in the groove, the more satisfied they—and some of their patrons—tend to be.

Most of our musicals mobilize their vast and joyous skills to make an indestructible stencil seem different without varying it. Although they may alter their dialects, they are fond of telling the same old stories. They occupy the eyes and ears. And stir the senses. But, though they pass the time, they by-pass the mind—deliberately. Their aim is Peace-through-Joy, which they interpret as Peace-through-Relaxation.

In spite of their amazing professionalism, our musicals are often tired shows for tired people. Not physically exhausted. Far from it. Usually they are all thyroid and frenzy. Theirs is a more final fatigue than that of the body. Their imaginations are weary. Since they present everything except a challenge, they leave the perceptions unquickened. They realize old hopes instead of raising new ones. If in general they apply themselves to filling an hour rather than emptying one, it is because their producers know, as James Russell Lowell once admitted when lecturing, that this is the easier course.

Occasionally, however, a window is thrown open, admitting strong fresh breezes into this domain of satin and spangles that gets along so nicely without ventilation. Occasionally, too, a musical comes along that even swings wide a door on corridors unexplored and unsuspected.

Then the difference is felt at once. This world becomes exciting rather than relaxing. It stimulates instead of lulls. It pleases in new ways, not old; providing those alert pleasures which the familiar cannot yield, but which are the dividends of novelty.

Let something like "Shuffle Along," "The Garrick Gaities," "Charlot's Revue," "The Little Show," "I'd Rather Be Right," "Pins and Needles," "Pal Joey," "I Married an Angel," "Oklahoma!," or this season's "On the Town" be produced, and the impact is inescapable. The change is as welcome and invigorating as if an individualist had stepped out from a long line of Rockettes.

"Show Boat" would find its place upon such a list, if only it had inaugurated a new tradition instead of perfecting an old one. Certainly it lingers in the memory, along with "Oklahoma!" as the loveliest musical comedy our theatre has produced. But "Show Boat," though the finest flowering of a familiar bush, did not bloom as a new variety.

"Oklahoma!" was such a bloom. It is fresh in its innocence, sprung from the soil of the Southwest not the asphalt of Broadway. It is a folk play given the wingspread of song. It is a folk play that, because of its simplicity, can serve every man as his opera; a folk play, radiant, lusty, and wonderfully American, that somehow manages to create indoors the feelings that each man knows in the presence of a sunrise.

"On the Town" is another such bloom. It is different from "Oklahoma!"; as different as Manhattan is from the Southwest. But it is just as fresh in its approach to the city as "Oklahoma!" is in its approach to the soil.

Like Gilbert's Heavy Dragoon, "On the Town" is a hybrid; a happy tribute to Burbank. As most people remember, the receipt, given in "Patience," for a Heavy Dragoon was to take all the remarkable people in history and rattle them off to a popular tune. "The dash of a D'Orsay, divested of quackery—Narrative powers of Dickens and Thackeray—Victor Emmanuel—peak-hunting Peveril—Thomas Aquinas, and Dr. Sacheverell"—these were some of the ingredients.

Take of these elements all that is fusible
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!

"On the Town" is the residuum of many agreeable elements, made remarkable by having been melted down in the crucible of a highly imaginative production. It is an extension of Jerome Robbins's ballet, "Fancy Free." But, though it moves with the grace, style, and imagination of a ballet, the marriage it represents between Broadway and the ballet is too blissful to suggest that it was brought about by a shotgun's persuasion.

"On the Town" is dipped in that fountain of youth from which George Abbott ladles his ebullient productions.

ON THE TOWN, a musical comedy presented by Oliver Smith and Paul Feigay at the Adelphi Theatre. Book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Music and additional lyrics by Leonard Bernstein. Choreography by Jerome Robbins. Production designed by Oliver Smith. Costumes by Alvin Colt. Directed by George Abbott. With Sono Asato, Nancy Walker, Betty Comden, John Battles, Cris Alexander, Ray Harrison, and Adolph Green.

—*Richard Tucker*

Sono Osato and Ray Noble, in a ballet scene in "On the Town."

STAGE

Have YOU seen them in
LIFE WITH FATHER ?
EMPIRE THEATRE, B'way at 40th St.

"A BRAND NEW BROADWAY HIT. A honey of a show." —GUERNSEY, Herald Tribune
CHERYL CRAWFORD presents
MARGARET WEBSTER'S Greatest Triumph
VERA ZORINA • CANADA LEE
THE TEMPEST
with ARNOLD MOSS
ALVIN Theatre, W. 52nd St. Eves. 8:30, Mats. Sat. & Feb. 22

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The Abbott touch is upon it, too, so far as pace and precision are concerned. It is not, however, just a young person's show. Although it has the energy of "Best Foot Forward," that energy is now released in channels leading to a new, far worthier outlet.

The evening's tone is established at once by Leonard Bernstein's score. Mr. Bernstein is no Tin Pan Alley tunesmith. He is a composer, knowledgable and gifted, whose aim is higher than to provide melodies that the deaf can whistle on their way out of the theatre. His music does not stop at being either lively or lovely, although it can be both. It is adventurous, written in an idiom uncommon along Broadway, and as fresh in its feeling as is the production as a whole.

But "On the Town" has even more to recommend it than its exuberant fusion of grace, youth, and music. It has a book that makes fair sense, and fairer nonsense. It is a book about three young sailors with twenty-four hours' leave in a Manhattan they have never seen before. It is a book that sends these sailors searching the city for a girl known as "Miss Turnstiles," who is supposed to be the subway's girl-of-the-month. It is a book, in other words, that has room in it for sharp satire of the people, the manners, and the night clubs of that helluva town which it describes New York as being. Yet even while its spirit is gay, this gaiety is the more intelligently observed because beneath it one feels the present's poignancy for those in the service whose hours of carefree pleasure are numbered.

The settings of Oliver Smith are blessed with the same freshness that distinguishes the book, the music, Mr. Robbins's choreography, and the performances in general. John Battles, Cris Alexander, and Adolph Green, the three sailors, are youngsters who play with the skill of veterans. Nancy Walker, also a youngster, is a toughy who has long since demonstrated her comic prowess.

The "Miss Turnstiles" of the evening is Sono Osato who last year attracted wide attention in "One Touch of Venus." Once again she proves herself to be an extraordinary performer. She manages to combine the cool beauty of Sorine's "Pavlova" with a sense of humor subtler than Fannie Brice's, but Brice-like in its contagious qualities. Miss Osato is a genuine addition to our musical comedy stage. She is a young person, arresting and brilliantly endowed, who is already a personage.

It is exciting to see so many young people, possessed of such manifest talent, assembled on one stage, saying a fresh thing freshly. It is exciting to observe the bounce, intelligence, gaiety, and style of the production as a whole. It is exciting to sit not relaxed but bolt upright in the presence of a musical comedy. It is exciting to realize that you are faced with something new, young, and vital; something which dares to turn its back upon the conventional; something that is intelligent without being highbrow, and artful but not arty.

Most assuredly, "On the Town" is no average musical comedy. It is one of those notable offerings which our show shops make from time to time, and in which the theatre shifts its gears and goes into high.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Warrant Officer Irwin Shaw, well-known playwright and short-story writer, is assigned to the staff of *Yank,* the Army newspaper. His plays include "Bury the Dead," "The Gentle People," and "Sons and Soldiers."

John Farrar, distinguished publisher and editor, is at present on special assignment with the Overseas Publications Bureau of the Office of War Information.

Jesse Stuart, the accomplished novelist, poet, and short-story writer, is Kentucky's gift to the union. He was published for the first time, we are proud to remind our readers, in *The Saturday Review.*

Hilda Lawrence has retreated from a job in a New York publishing house to devote herself to writing. Her own recipe for the detective novel was evidenced in "Blood on the Snow," and in a new mystery, "A Time to Die."

George Panetta is the author of a robust account of the doings of his own captivating and highly Italian family, "We Ride a White Donkey," published last year. His present connection is with a New York advertising agency.

Alice Hackett is Associate Editor of *Publishers' Weekly* and editor of the Bowker Book Guides. Her book, "Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945," will be published in April.

STAGE

BROCK PEMBERTON presents
Frank Fay in "Harvey"
A New Comedy by MARY CHASE
with JOSEPHINE HULL
Directed by ANTOINETTE PERRY
48th St. Thea. E. of B'y. EVGS. 8:40. MATS. WED. & SAT.

NEW YORK — Morosco Theatre
ELLIOTT NUGENT · BETTY FIELD · AUDREY CHRISTIE
ALFRED de LIAGRE, Jr., presents
the Voice of the Turtle
by JOHN VAN DRUTEN
K. T. STEVENS · HUGH MARLOWE · BETTY LAWFORD
CHICAGO — Selwyn Theatre

Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein 2d present
MADY CHRISTIANS • OSCAR HOMOLKA
in JOHN van DRUTEN'S
I REMEMBER MAMA
from Kathryn Forbes' 'Mama's Bank Account'
with JOAN TETZEL
MUSIC BOX, W. 45th St. • Matinees Thurs. & Sat.

EXHIBITION

Exhibition of SCULPTURE
MOCHARNIUK
Feb. 12 - Mar. 3
MARQUIE GALLERY
16 West 57 St., N. Y. C.

SCREEN

A Daring Picture on a Hush-Hush Subject!
G. C. F. Presents
"MR. EMMANUEL"
A TWO CITIES FILM PRODUCTION
Made in London, England.
Released through United Artists
Starring FELIX ALYMER with Greta Gynt and Walter Rilla
BRANDT'S GOTHAM BROADWAY & 47TH STREET

A Roaring Salute to the Dauntless Defenders of
Moscow Skies
Produced in the U.S.S.R. An Artkino release
They Laughed . . . They Loved . . . They Conquered!
FIFTH WEEK American Premiere
STANLEY BROADWAY & 47TH STREET

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The Impoverished Aristocracy

THE HEADMISTRESS. By Angela Thirkell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1945. 310 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

MISS THIRKELL has given us in this work another of her thoroughly charming, witty, and urbane stories of English country life—of the gentry and the peerage and the upper upper-middle class, complete with all appurtenances and appropriate family retainers. As in many of her former novels, the scene is Barsetshire, a mythical shire I believe invented by Anthony Trollope but taken over by Miss Thirkell without a struggle as the indisputable hand to carry on the chronicling of that particular kind of well-bred, gently snobbish, civilized, noblesse oblige English provincial tradition. Barset and Barchester may have been borrowed, but Little Misfit is a triumph of nomenclature all Miss Thirkell's own.

Miss Thirkell's people never live in houses with just street numbers; they all have names—Arcot House, Dowlan Cottage, etc., etc. Mr. and Mrs. Belton belonged to that impoverished gentry who own enormous houses and in spite of what is described as poverty still manage to keep half a dozen servants in addition to gamekeepers, gardeners, and stablemen. The Beltons, of Harefield Hall, however, came to the pass where they had to let their estate to the Girls Foundation School of the Worshipful Company of Hosiers, an ancient Guild still functioning with all the trappings and resounding titles of its earliest days. Miss Sparling, the Headmistress, was just a trifle too perfect in the role, and made everyone a little uncertain as to what her social status should be. "That women interests me," remarked Mr. Carton, an Oxford don who lived at Assaye House in the village, "she is the perfect female don and yet there's something. Did I tell you that Oriel [the Vicar] discovered by chance that old Canon Horbury whom he knew in his young days was her grandfather? That sort of thing always tells."

Mrs. Belton, who had naturally never heard of Canon Horbury, said how very interesting that was. And we must here state that Miss Sparling at once went up in her estimation. "It may be snobbishness to think the better of a person because your Vicar has known her grandfather who was a Canon, but it lies deep at the roots of social life, and there is good reason for it."

It would be wrong to say that nothing happens in Miss Thirkell's novels, but it happens so imperceptibly that one hardly notices what plot there is, so engaged does one become with personalities, with side glimpses, with the delicate satire and good-tempered cynicism. Miss Thirkell, like her countrywomen Margery Sharp and Stella Gibbons, has a great flair for lampooning in the deftest possible way social custom and certain types of people. And she likes especially to satirize her own sex. In these pages we find The Women, but if we may be pardoned for using a good old Anglo-Saxon word, not the bitchy ones. Miss Thirkell's women are charming, vague, kindly, scatterbrained ladies with all the knowledge of finance and world affairs exhibited by Mother in "Life with Father." "Whenever I see Lady Graham," says Mr. Carton again, "I feel how entirely unnecessary intellect is in a woman."

Things do happen in the book—Mrs. Belton's daughter Elsa gets engaged to a very nice and very wealthy young man who is sufficiently dominating to be a good match in a number of ways for this self-willed and charmingly spoiled young lady; her son Charles leaves for a Port of Embarkation; Miss Sparling and Mr. Carton are left with "an understanding." A poignant schoolgirl infatuation is lived through by Heather Adams, a lump of a girl at the School. But life flows along in a leisurely and quite pleasant fashion in spite of rationing, blackouts, the war, and the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Belton are now living in the Village instead of at Harefield Hall. Fortunately things turn out well and we are sure that they will be able, in the next book, to go back to the Hall.

Miss Thirkell's brilliant, easy, conversational though never colloquial style carries the reader along in a glow of pleasure. She has a way of establishing a rapport with the reader by what is really a trick of the older novelists—that of the author's addressing asides or comments to the reader direct. It's rather reminiscent of Thackeray, and gives the reader that same feeling of sitting across the hearth from the author.

It is a great temptation to quote scenes and snatches of conversation from the book. Miss Thirkell is a master at reproducing the kind of conversation which goes on among a company of well-bred but not very intelligent people around a dinner table—full of vague loose ends and unconnected fragments and baffling irrelevancies. Founders Day at the School, the meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary, the skating party, all give Miss Thirkell full scope for exercising her sense of the ridiculous, for employing her keen and kindly satire and her sympathetic deft characterization. I can only recommend that you get a copy of "The Headmistress" yourself.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Clocks or watches played an important role in the lives of the characters who are described below. Can you identify them? Allowing 5 points for each character remembered, and another 5 for the work in which he appeared, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 36.

1. At the most important moment of this character's life, his mother interrupted his father to ask if he had not forgotten to wind the clock.
2. He sold his watch, his most cherished possession, in order to buy his wife a set of combs for a Christmas present.
3. This character had a watch which was supposed to tell the day of the month, but it didn't run even though the *best* butter was used in the works.
4. Sixteen years after he had slipped into an abandoned stone quarry and drowned, his body was identified by his gold watch and seals.
5. As a farewell gift to his favorite reporter, this hard-boiled editor presented him with his own watch, inscribed "To the Best Newspaper Man I Know."
6. Every timepiece in her house was stopped at the same hour, to commemorate the moment on her wedding day when her fiance had jilted her.
7. This clock and a China Plate were the only witnesses of a duel in which the contestants completely destroyed each other.
8. From a brief study of a watch, this detective deduced that its owner had been an eldest son who inherited the watch from his father, was a man of untidy habits, was left with good prospects but threw away his chances, lived for some time in poverty with occasional short intervals of prosperity, finally took to drink and died.
9. This clock was bought on the morning that its owner was born, ran ninety years, and stopped short, never to go again, when the old man died.
10. All the clocks in London were striking 10 minutes to nine to inform this traveler that he was arriving late.

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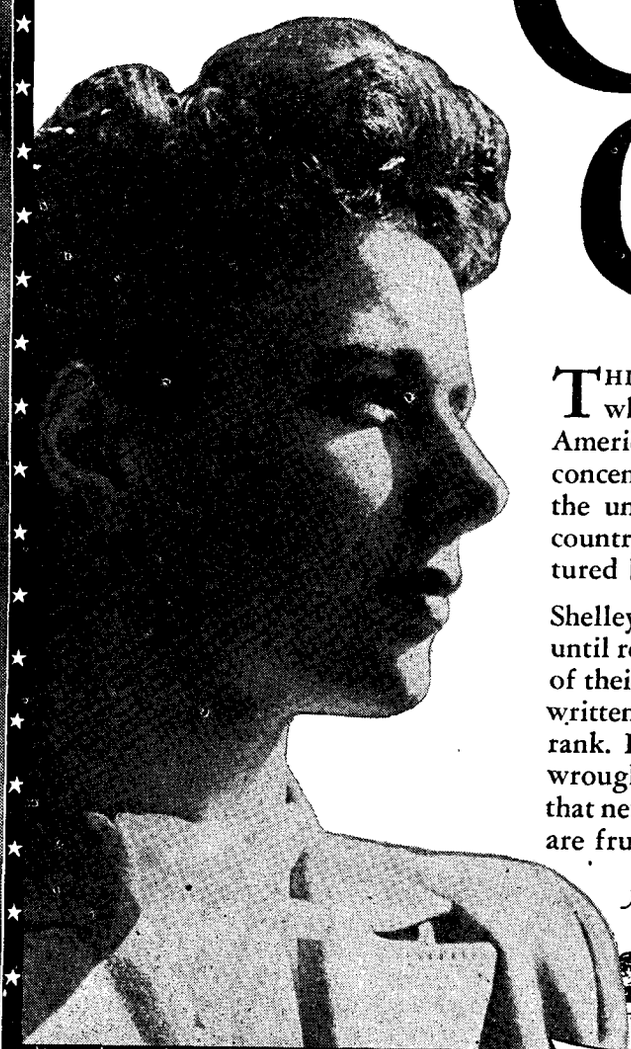
Introducing

Shelley Mydans and her dramatic novel

of Americans left behind in the Philippines . . .

THE Open City



THIS realistic and moving novel—which tells what happened to three American girls interned in Santo Tomas concentration camp outside Manila—is the untold story of thousands of our countrymen and women who were captured by the Japanese.

Shelley Mydans was herself one of them until repatriated on the *Gripsholm*. Out of their experience and her own she has written a psychological novel of the first rank. It is a revelation of the changes wrought in hearts and minds and bodies that never have a moment's privacy, and are frustrated by segregation.

At your bookseller's, $2.50

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

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Highway to the Old West

THE MISSOURI. By Stanley Vestal. Illustrated by Getlar Smith. (Rivers of America Series.) New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1945. 367 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

TERRITORIALLY, Mr. Vestal has the largest assignment given to any author of the Rivers of America Series, now under the editorship of Hervey Allen. The Mississippi having been divided between two writers, his 2500-mile stream, important even before it flows east out of Montana, and draining with its tributaries ten or eleven states, sprawls over a greater domain than any other in the list—even the St. Lawrence. Historically, too, he has a theme of tremendous scope. The Missouri was the river of Lewis and Clark, of Manuel Lisa, General Ashley, and other organizers of the fur trade, of such noted travellers as George Catlin, Henry R. Schoolcraft, and Prince Maximilian, of a host of adventurous steamboat captains, of explorers like Jedediah Smith, Kit Carson, and Frémont, of doughty hunters and trappers like Hugh Glass, Jim Bridger, and John Colter; its waters were stained red by the warfare of freesoilers and border ruffians in the days of John Brown, and of Sioux and regulars in the time of Sitting Bull and Custer. The miners and vigilantes, the cattle-ranchers (including Theodore Roosevelt) and the rustlers, the buffalo-hunters and the *bois brulés,* gave its upper reaches an abundance of adventurous episodes.

Nearly all the river books are romantic in spirit and impressionistic in method. Mr. Vestal's, no exception to the general rule, is at times pleasantly reminiscent of an old-fashioned diorama. We are moved slowly up-stream, the narrator halting at appropriate points to deliver his rapid lecture on the scenery, people, and history of the district—at Lexington and Sibley in central Missouri for a discourse on old steamboat days, and such disasters as the explosion which blew the *Saluda* and a hundred passengers to flinders; at Leavenworth for an account of the Mormon crossing; at Council Bluffs for a description of Lincoln's meeting with Granville M. Dodge, projector of the Union Pacific; just above Sioux City for a chapter on Sergeant Floyd, the only soldier under Lewis and Clark to die; and farther up, between Yankton and Fort Sully, for a description of the perils encountered by the old fur-traders from famine, smallpox, winter storms, and Indian ambushes. Thus the gossipy compound of scene-painting, folklore, narrow escapes by field and flood, and informal history is continued until, far to the northwest, we reach Fort Benton, near where Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce fought their last heroic battle, and Helena, where the gulches were so rich in gold that a single shipment by wagon was valued at more than two million dollars. Mr. Vestal is wilfully vagrant in his wanderings through the West and through the nineteenth century; but by and large he does follow the muddy river from mouth to sources, and since settlement and history also proceeded upstream, he also follows a rough chronological course.

Though a 300-page volume on so important a river is necessarily superficial at many points, Mr. Vestal's sketch contains more new material—the fruit for the most part not of research in books and archives, but of talks with old-timers and experts—than the casual reader might suppose. Some parts of the book are much too hastily done to be satisfactory. More precision and fuller detail would have improved the pages on steamboats, Mormons, exploration, and John Brown. The chapters on the Indians, however, have the author's familiar gusto and expertness on that topic, and the battle of Sitting Bull and General Sully at Kildeer Mountain inspires Mr. Vestal to a creditable burst of balladry. One fault of nearly all the river books (and indeed, of nearly all books of local or regional history) is that they leave the last fifty years untouched. Mr. Vestal is to be credited with an illuminating account of the sixty-million-dollar Fort Peck Dam, which the Missouri River States would like to make simply the opening project in a huge river-development scheme benefitting the huge area from Wyoming to Missouri and Iowa.

People Under the Occupation

STRANGERS SHOULD NOT WHISPER. By Jan-Albert Goris. New York: L. B. Fischer. 1945. 260 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

AFTER "Belgium in Bondage" this new book by the Belgian Commissioner of Information in this country is rather disappointing. It is a collection of articles and editorials first published in *News from Belgium,* and some of them may have been both informative and effective as such. Put between covers, they make for not too satisfying a book.

Underground and resistance literature written outside occupied territory is bound to appear dated the very morning following liberation. However good the channels at an exile's disposal may be, and however competent a writer he may be himself, his stories can never hope to compete with reports of people who were on the spot. In the case of Belgium—and not in her case alone—there is an additional cause which deprives occupation stories of most of their value: the picture of a closely united populace under the impact of common misery burying all internal social dissensions, old and new, is unable to stand the test of recent news. And thus the reader soon comes to wonder how much of that discrepancy is due to lack of complete pre-liberation information, how much to the sincere patriotic policy of a propaganda official, and how much to wishful thinking.

All of which doesn't mean that some of M. Goris's resistance stories are not very readable. "Eleven Hundred Honest Men," for instance, is as fine a piece of this kind of writing as ever has warmed the cockles of our hearts. It is the story of the Belgian notaries' guild (an age-old body of life-appointed dignitaries) which to the last man resisted the demand of the Germans to make "legal" their wholesale robbing of Jews, "enemy" aliens, and Belgian citizens beyond their reach.

This volume also contains a number of sketches of famous Belgians, apparently intended to form a, so to speak, spiritual portrayal of the country, but clearly suffering from over-popularization. Only the biography of Father Damien, the priest from Brabant who "laid down his life for his leper friends" on Molokai Island, stands out.

The best part of M. Goris's offering is furnished by his comments on American life and his thoughts on the exile's psychological situation in this country. His discovery of rural America (and its numerous similarities with Western European country and small-town life) has been shared by many an open-eyed newcomer. M. Goris can be humorous, witty, critical, and even caustic on matters American. Yet he never disposes lightly or with ennui of American optimism—that "hardy perennial" which puzzles and at times cannot help irritating the European-born in the spiritual landscape of this country.

No doubt, M. Goffin, though not a scholar of Mr. Brogan's rank, could write a fine study on the intensified interrelations of American and Continental thinking—which, after all, is one of the very few promising by-products of our present world disaster.

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The Fighting French in Africa

HALF PAST WHEN. By Hassoldt Davis. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1944. 283 pp. $3.

Reviewed by JOHN LATOUCHE

A REMARKABLE service is performed by Hassoldt Davis's latest book. Although its picaresque quality may at times disguise its pertinence, the story it tells has a direct bearing on present developments of the French attitude. Brazzaville seems far removed from the political convolutions of Paris at the moment, but in Africa were established many emotional currents now merging into the sometimes ambiguous policies of the De Gaulle government.

Mr. Davis has depicted the flowering of these emotions with a vivid candor that simplifies for the American reader a complex phase of the war. His account is authentic, because it is written from the inside. Originally, his intention had been to report on the French military activities, but he remained with their forces as an officer engaged in active duty.

The role of the Fighting French in the African campaign has not been given its proper interpretation by the harassed correspondents who have tried to assess the shifting values of that turbulent period: in "Half Past When" the balance is restored. Here is an informal history, unfolded with humanity and passion. The strange assortments of races, classes, and professions who rallied to the aid of France in her zero hour live in these pages with the ardor and humility which I have noticed among them during my stay in Equatorial Africa.

Mr. Davis manages to recreate setting as well as characters, which is no small task. The heat, the dust, the constant strains on the nervous system, the ever-present dangers of disease and violence, the primitive conditions—these form an atmosphere that is hard to communicate, but it comes through with all its sordid glory intact.

Portraits of the Army personnel are drawn with fidelity and a certain robust charm. They range from such well-known figures as Generals Le Clerc and Legentilhomme, Dick de Sales, and Commandant de Kersauson, to the tender sketches of Marianne Terre, of French Legionnaires, of the blind dog named Bill, of anonymous soldiers with white, black, brown, and yellow skins, who are united by a common instinct for liberty.

Living symbols emerge from the mass pattern. Especially moving are the paragraphs about the natives that arrived in Sierra Leone with the Lorraine Cross cut into the skin over their hearts. One of them was captured by Vichy soldiers, who mockingly cut the cross into the soles of his feet, so that he would be forced to trample on the emblem of his belief. And tramp he did, stumbling over jungle trails until he rejoined the fighting forces at Fort Lamy. This is only a small detail from the gallery of gallant men and women, but it remains with me, and is typical of the longer sections as well.

The book is at its weakest when Mr. Davis's athletic prose breaks training, and sidetracks into paeans about bottles of Scotch, celebrating the literary tough tradition that might be called the Hemingway of All Flesh; occasionally the tight-lipped, understated heroism becomes self-conscious, since many of the heroes I met there were extremely voluble and emotional about their adventures. But these are small objections in a work that says so much, with conviction and love. As a record of brave men who triumphed over appeasers at home, rebuffs from their Allies, and inadequate equipment, to reassert their national spirit, "Half Past When" is unique and fascinating.

Spirit of the Sea

MY LIFE TO THE DESTROYERS. By Capt. L. A. Abercrombie and Fletcher Pratt. New York: Henry Holt. 1944. 157 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ROGER SHAW

HERE is as good a little naval book as one is likely to find. The skipper-author sank the *first* Japanese submarine after Pearl Harbor, and has thrice won the Navy Cross for success and gallantry in action in the Pacific. His collaborator (if that word is still respectable) is the well-known naval expert and biography man, Fletcher Pratt, who catches the spirit of the sea and the war with a remarkable flair.

Destroyers are a "must" to any fleet. They are the best torpedo-fighters, the best anti-sub and anti-air defense, the ideal convoy ship, and the screening, scouting, speed "cavalry" of any major naval action. How they function and how they are built, the authors explain in great detail, from the laying down of the I-beam keel to a fight-victory at Tassafronga: "shipyard to graveyard," as somebody puts it. The navy story-teller is evidently a likable Yankee figure, Annapolis class of 1921; and, all in all, this brisk, colloquial compendium and adventure tale can be highly recommended.

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Lilla's Problem

TOMORROW SOMETIMES COMES. ***By Elizabeth Carfrae.*** *New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.* 1945. 258 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

MISS CARFRAE'S novel reads uncomfortably like one of the "problems" served up for radio audiences by the Court of Human Relations, or is it Mr. Alexander? Your Honor, my name is Lilla Reynolds. I am an English girl. When I married this man, Robin Moreland, I knew nothing of love, I didn't know what the other girls at the office were talking about. I just liked this man and thought it would all be very comfortable. We got along pretty well even though it was a bit dull. He forbade me, at first, to keep on with my job, but I did get back to the office after all. We tried to make a go of it. Then the war came, and I did my bit in a Control Room, where the telephone reports come in. That's where I met Charles—Captain Craven. He had been at Dunkirk and was let out of active service on account of his arm. Once, at the switchboard, our

hands touched, and then I knew, at once, we were in love. We both knew it. What were we to do then? I left Robin. He kicked up a row and wouldn't divorce me, but I left anyway. We were happy, Charles and I, for a while, until it happened. Robin was caught in a bomb explosion, badly hurt he was, and he lost his memory of our separation. All he knew was I was his wife, and he wanted me. What could I do? I went to him and I am with him now, keeping him alive, living this tragic lie, and all the time suffering so. What is it going to come to?

Ah yes, Lilla, this is a tragic coil, but have faith. It will be solved. Robin's going to improve, and his memory will come back. He will remember your parting and think better of it now. He will give you a divorce. Further, he will form an attachment for his nurse, and she for him, so there you will be, the four of you, as happily paired as you please. The war is quite a factor in these plots, isn't it?

Thus it works out. Miss Carfrae tells it straight, and at greater length, but she does not discover any profounder qualities in it.

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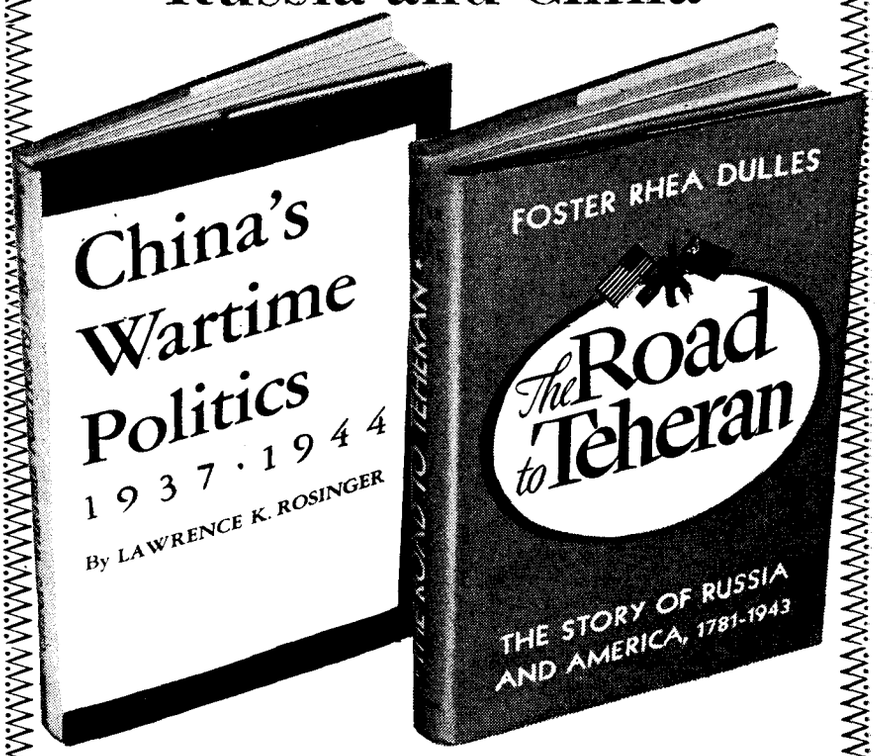

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The Advantage of Certain Errors

THE DREAM OF DESCARTES. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by Mabelle L. Andison. New York: Philosophical Library. 1945. 220 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

THERE is the story of the young contemporary disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas who presented himself before the chairman of the department of philosophy at Harvard with the request that he be allowed to matriculate for an advanced degree.

"What is your background in philosophy?," politely inquired the chairman after the usual preliminary conversation.

"Well, sir," replied the student, "I have studied Plato and Aristotle faithfully, have read many of the Fathers, and am thoroughly grounded in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas." And then, as an afterthought, "Oh, yes, I have also had a course in modern errors."

These "modern errors," of course, began with Réné Descartes, the great philosopher and mathematician of the seventeenth century, the discoverer of analytical geometry and, by almost universal consent, the man entitled to be known as the father of modern thought. It was his "mistakes," however cautiously made in order to avoid the fate of the Copernicans, which gave philosophy its initial impetus to throw off the dead exegetical hand of a scholasticism which by his time had become effete, and to assert its new independence of theology. Although not all the credit belongs to Descartes, it was this impulse which encouraged the development of secular philosophy and which stimulated the growth of modern science. Above all, Descartes gave to philosophy a new instrument by which to acquire knowledge—the instrument of an untrammeled reason.

To Jacques Maritain, however, who is the most prominent and most indefatigable of present day followers of the "angelic doctor" of the thirteenth century, these are errors still, errors which led to the "arrogant injunctions" of Immanuel Kant, to the "facile scepticism" of the modern mind, and to the shallow unrealities of contemporary science. In five chapters, three of which were published as articles between 1920 and 1922, one delivered as a lecture in Paris in 1931, and one prepared especially for this volume, he considers the Cartesian achievement and finds it wanting. Indeed, to the author of this book, who has just recently been appointed French Ambassador to the Vatican, Descartes, although he may be given half a laurel for his "blockade-lifting" task, doomed us to three centuries of rationalism and to three centuries of philosophic failure. It is not reason which is at fault, maintains Maritain, but Cartesian reason, that instrument which presumes to get along without divine assistance and without divine orientation. Had not Descartes "distorted" certain ideas of Scholastic philosophy, had he not exalted reason above faith, and had he not, above all, subordinated theology to philosophy, he would have seen that his "errors" were "corrected" four centuries earlier by St. Thomas. His greatest sin was pride, pride in the potentialities of a merely human knowledge.

Of Maritain's scholarship in the field of philosophy it is impossible to speak too highly. This book exhibits his analytical power on a most profound and exacting level. It is written, in addition, with a grace, a luminosity, and an economy of statement which are all too rare in philosophical writing. It is with such felicity of style, perhaps, that men may write when they possess the truth—a felicity often denied to those who only modestly and humbly inquire after truth. Between Maritain and the Thomists on the one hand and modern secular philosophers on the other lies a world, an entire universe. For Maritain the divine certainties found in faith strengthen and nourish philosophy; for the secular thinker they prejudice it. While paying tribute to Maritain's mastery of metaphysics and to the brilliance with which he espouses his cause, one may at the same time regret that such a mind cannot enlist in the service of human science. For the "errors" of Descartes may also appear as shining stars which illuminated his own time and which shed their light into succeeding centuries and into our own day. Modern empirical science and critical philosophy are indebted in no small measure to the Cartesian "dream."

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 568)

W. H. HERNDON:
ADDRESS ON LINCOLN
(SPRINGFIELD, ILL., DEC. 12, 1865)

Mr. Lincoln read less and thought more than any man of his standing in America. When young he read The Bible, when of age, Shakespeare. Cautious, cool, concentrated . . . he possessed originality and power of thought in an eminent degree.

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Fine Art of the American Indian

MEDIEVAL AMERICAN ART. By Pál Kelemen. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1943. *With illustrations. 2 vols.* 414 *pp.* $22.50.

Reviewed by H. J. SPINDEN

MR. KELEMEN undoubtedly has achieved most of what he set out to do in this work: he has produced a photographic summary of the fine art of the American Indian which fills the esthetic eye. Moreover, his exhibit is truly representative, in an objective way, of the highest civilizations of the New World before Columbus. This is in Volume II. The text of Kelemen's artistic resumé in Volume I does not possess the authority of his pictures nor should that reasonably be expected of a European critic and student who turns his attention to a new field of such vast extent.

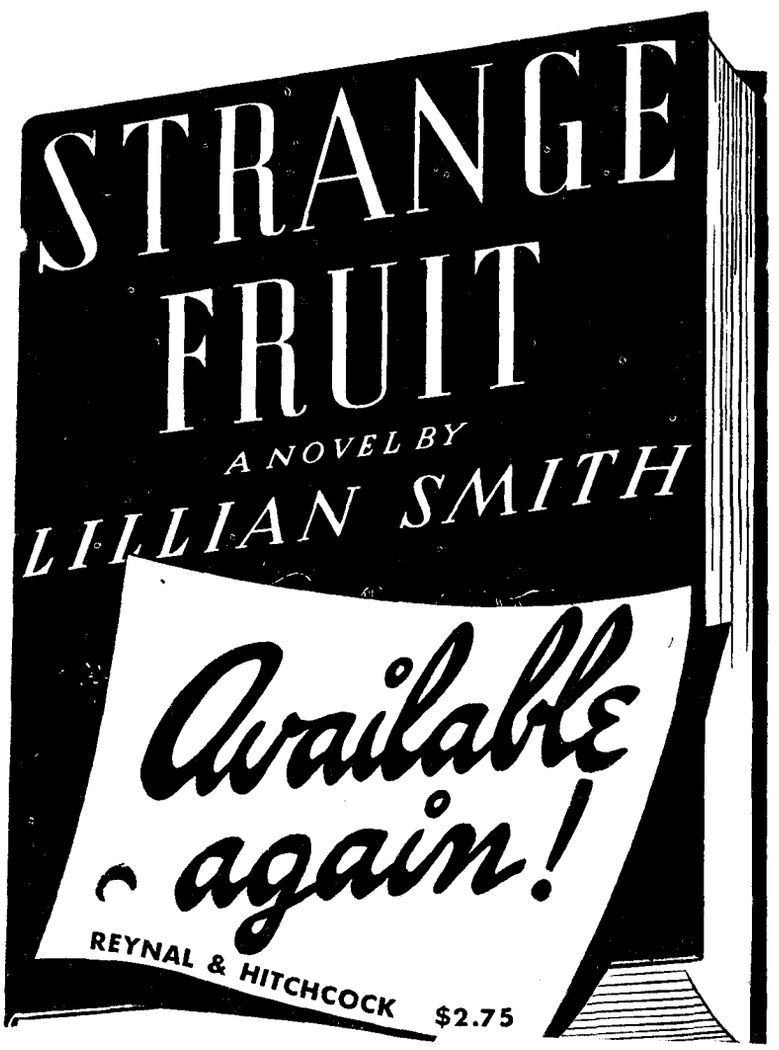
"Medieval American Art was chosen as title," he tells us, "because it designates the period within which all the objects and ruins here presented were created, paralleling the Middle Ages of Europe." But this coincidence is only accidental. Following an essential separation of Old World and New World men, which dates from a low stage of the Neolithic, each hemisphere has advanced on its own independent timefront. There are, to be sure, remarkable parallels in architecture and sculpture, in ceramics and metal working, in fresco painting and manuscript illumination, which happen to occur in America in the millenium following the fall of imperial Rome. But equally significant comparisons can be made on very different time levels: for instance between ceramic designs of early Susa and of our recent Pueblo Indians or, to reverse the time charges, between the Archaic figurines of Mexico and the work of certain modern sculptors in New York or Paris. Such independent performances and recapitulations find their answer—as an anthropologist views the problem—in psychic unity and distributed abilities within the human species. Especially is this true when archeological remains are used to rebuild an inclusive picture of bygone skills and purposes.

But Kelemen, in weighing the soul or souls of ancient America shows little interest in the ethical and religious meanings which then obtained, or in the evolutionary sequences of symbolic forms, or in such genuine sciences as astronomy and mathematics which exerted powerful controls over the imagination of the Redman. He says in one place: "Pre-Columbian art was developed by a mentality totally alien to ours. An artist trained to our beauty ideals and technical mannerisms will unconsciously approach the pre-Columbian subject biased by his preconceptions."

I seriously question whether the mentality of ancient America was totally alien to ours. Their lexicon was different to be sure, and we must translate their words to discover how their thinking was rationality comparable to ours. Their esthetics also are comparable to ours, else how could Kelemen find typical products of the Indian civilizations which he could accept so wholeheartedly? But does not intelligence follow one set of rules among all the tribes of men? We understand Pachacutic, the Peruvian, when he says "He who envies another injures himself": we understand Nezahualcoyotl, the Aztec, when he insists, "The proper worship of a supreme god is good deeds." Also we understand—if only we wish to admit it—how the Maya might have persuaded themselves that conjunctions of Venus and the sun are fraught with calamity.

Kelemen speaks of an historical approach: but he makes, it seems to me, an approach which more accurately might be called geographical and impressionistic. He lays the basic order of his descriptions in a geographic sequence beginning in our Southwest, the land of the Cliff-dwellers and the modern Pueblo Indians, then passes to a complex Mexico where Toltecs, Totonacs, Olmecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, and Aztecs bid for attention. After that comes the Maya area, again complex unless only the lowland members of a large stock of peoples are considered. The Interlying Area has a few peaks of art among the Chorotega and the Quimbaya. Lastly, the Andean Area reaches to Bolivia. Under each geographical division he considers, under separate heads, architecture, sculpture, pottery, etc., so that no single culture is treated historically as a unit.

Photography is his dish and he is correct enough in saying that redrawing is dangerous, in that details may be forced. But also new facts may be discovered, while details also may be forced in photographic lighting. So long as the principal interest is the physiological effect produced by a work of art on sensitive nerve ends, the clear photograph serves very well. But what if one wishes to use art as a window to the past?



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Traveller But No Tourist

A TRAVELLER'S WAR. By Alaric Jacob. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1944. 393 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

ALARIC JACOB is a young Englishman who for five years worked as a Washington correspondent before being sent to the war by Reuter's. He comes from a distinguished line of British civil servants—such as General John Jacob who came out from England in the eighteen twenties and served the East India Company for thirty years without a break until he died. "He never went home on leave."

Perhaps it is that ancestry which has given Mr. Jacob a secret vein of extraordinary understanding of foreign lands combined with a remarkable personal restraint in measuring up these countries. And the same modesty seems to have accompanied him to war. "When you are journeying to the wars," he admits in one of the more contemplative passages of this war travelogue, "you experience a feeling of guilt if you dally long over recollections of pure travel; the war looms constantly up ahead of you, pulling you on, and although you are bound to play the tourist along that way, you feel obliged to hasten over it. Men are being killed behind you and before. . . ."

About two-thirds of Mr. Jacob's book are devoted to the Lybian and Egyptian desert campaigns with whose ups and downs he was associated from Wavell's daring and ill-equipped "crusader offensive" to Montgomery's victory at Alamein. There is a touch of Kipling in Mr. Jacob's love of the "desert rats," that oddly assorted British-South African-Anzac-Polish-Greek army with which for nearly two years "old Rommel" played hide and seek. But its picturesque exploits and all individual bravery aside, Mr. Jacob presents a case for that first Army of the Nile, and above all for General Auchinleck who, as he insists, made possible and prepared the ground for Montgomery's final success. Perhaps Mr. Jacob's conclusions will not always correspond with the future findings of military historians; but he is convincing throughout. Moreover, he is a romanticist at heart, attracted by Wavell's and Auchinleck's fight against long odds and the latter's sometimes fateful loyalty to early campaign companions.

Clearly, this young Britisher does not like "Monty" very much, and what he at first terms his "very assiduous, energetic and painstaking mediocrity." He almost seems to resent the material superiority at the disposal of his reorganized army at the decisive moment. Yet his picture of that decisive moment, the great soldier Monty in it, is one of the finest pieces of battle reportage to come out of this war.

> Now it was zero hour. . . . The Highlanders were singing "Loch Lomond" as they moved up in trucks; ordinarily the sound of hundreds of voices would have given the show away but with hundreds of guns singing too, it made no difference. When they debussed, each company had its piper at the head and the whole division advanced in open formation in a series of lines, with the pipe music playing them into battle. They had to cross 3000 yards of No Man's Land with scarcely a single shrub on it—as flat as a billiard table. No cover was possible. So the Scots just did without it and jogged doggedly forward, closing ranks when a man fell. One of the pipe majors died as he played.

Comparing the attitude and talk of British soldiers on foreign soil with what American correspondents have reported of their own fighting men, one is tempted to remark that the Tommy's nostalgia for his London or his "ol' Glasgee" seems to be tempered by an inherited sense of his country's imperial mission. Mr. Jacob repeatedly calls himself a confirmed Marxist; yet he cannot help his own gusto being excited by sights which would have greatly pleased his imperialist ancestors as well. The truly delightful sketch of wartime Cairo is but one of them.

Good fortune gave him a chance between battles for a trip to Persia and Azarbaijan. It was in those colorful parts of the East that he first saw the Red Army. But before going to Russia

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. "Tristram Shandy," by Laurence Sterne. 2. James Young, in "The Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry. 3. The Mad Hatter, in "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll. 4. Dunstan Cass, in "Silas Marner," by George Eliot. 5. Walter Burns, in "The Front Page," by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. 6. Miss Havisham, in "Great Expectations," by Charles Dickens. 7. The Old Dutch Clock, in "The Duel," by Eugene Field. 8. Sherlock Holmes, in "The Sign of the Four," by Conan Doyle. 9. The grandfather, in "Grandfather's Clock," by Henry C. Work. 10. Phileas Fogg, in "Around the World in Eighty Days," by Jules Verne.

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proper, he returned to the desert and took part in the chase toward Tripoli.

And then he went to India. He has much to say on that most-discussed subject of Empire affairs. For a tourist as well as a skilled interviewer, he knows how to single out what is both essential and interesting. But he has wisely withstood the temptation of making pontifical statements on India. "Everything in India is indefinite . . . nothing is what it seems, and . . . the search for patterns of coherence in a subcontinent dedicated to the Amorphous is a mere weariness of the flesh."

His account of Gandhi's recent fast is not very likely to please the old man's miscellaneous admirers on both sides of the Atlantic; and neither is his report on the activities of Indian politicians and tabloid writers. But Mr. Jacob is quite outspoken, on the other hand, on the tactical failures of British policies in India, and the unfortunate deterioration of administrative talent:

> Our best brains have been staying away from India for the last generation or two and the dangerous notion has grown up that, somehow, the *second* best is good enough for India. . . . The prevailing tone of British life in India reflects the suburban tennis club, it is the life of the petty bourgeoisie that we now set before the Indian as an example —not the pattern of the trades union or the comradeship of the factory. . . . Our old pattern was aristocratic and had to be superseded. But we have not gone far enough in seeking its antithesis. Today you see the bank clerk playing at being proconsul.

The chapters on Russia form a kind of appendix to Mr. Jacob's extremely readable book. But while in some other respects (and reading habits being what they are), his offering may seem slightly belated to some, his presentation of the Soviet Union at the moment of the turning tide will be of paramount interest to all in these weeks of Russia's greatest offensive. "Recognizing," he says, "that in politics as in life you get nothing without paying for it, I knew that a dictatorship of the Proletariat is a high price to pay for the modernization of the country; but I felt that the stability and cohesion of the Russian people after the great Purges and after two years of war whose fortunes had gone steadily against them showed that, if the price were high, the benefits were correspondingly great."

In recommending this volume, it must be added that Mr. Jacob's style is entirely free from the usual journalese which has marred many a good and informative war book. His nineteenth-century civil servant forefathers would have enjoyed some of young Jacob's prose.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
STATE DEPARTMENT CAT *Mary Plum* (Crime Club: $2.)	George Stair, out of enemy prison camp, gets Washington job and uncovers spy plot; also catches killer.	Spy-stuff of the better sort. Plentiful thrills enlivened by humor and romantic moments.	Nice going
THE 17TH LETTER *Dorothy Cameron Disney* (Random House: $2.)	Perplexing contents of letter from missing pixman starts Manhattan couple on exciting career.	Thrills pile up fast in plot involving Nazi saboteurs, Royal Mounties, etc., with a smash wind-up in Halifax.	Superthriller
A TIME TO DIE *Hilda Lawrence* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Mark East investigates disappearance of woman from resort town, turns up murder, and trails cool and calculating killer.	A-1 on all counts—if you don't mind an extra-involved plot. Characters interesting, background fine, sleuthing logical, and shrewdly handled.	Rewarding
REMEMBERED DEATH *Agatha Christie* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Apparent suicide of young wife of solid Britisher turns out to be murder. Husband perishes same way. Col. Race investigates.	Although solution hinges on rather fortuitous coincidence, build-up is in best Christie manner, and yarn is puzzling to last few pages.	Standard brand
THEY NEVER SAY WHEN *Peter Cheyney* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Murder and vanishing tiaras in English country town engage attention of Slim Callaghan and Mr. Nikolls.	Typical Callaghan yarn —with lovely ladies falling for Slim's blandishments, and despicable villain driven to deserved death.	Fluff

HILDA LAWRENCE'S new mystery, A TIME TO DIE, is just published. Here is the same sensitive awareness of crime as a tragic event, the same skill at creating mood and character, the same mounting suspense that put Miss Lawrence's first book* on every major reviewer's list of the ten best of 1944 —and caused Meyer Berger to write in *The New York Times Book Review*:

"Miss Lawrence creates horror atmosphere the hard way, with a light touch that leaves no brush marks. This is as sinister a mystery as you are apt to find in modern fiction."

*Blood Upon The Snow

A TIME TO DIE

by Hilda Lawrence

$2.00

An Inner Sanctum Mystery

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A Quartet of Naturalists

SOUTH AMERICA CALLED THEM. Explorations of the Great Naturalists La Condamine, Humboldt, Darwin, Spruce. By Victor Wolfgang von Hagen. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1945. 311 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by NORMAN TAYLOR

NO antidote to the blood-spattered history of South America is as refreshing as this highly civilized account of the four greatest naturalists who ever worked there. No natural scientist can afford to miss reading of La Condamine, the equator-measurer; Humboldt who wrote on his passport, "traveling for the acquisition of knowledge"; Darwin, nursing the germ of his "Origin of Species" which was born at Galapagos; and Robert Spruce who was perhaps the greatest botanical collector of all time.

To the general reader the story of this quartet of immortals reads like fiction. But not since "The Weeping Wood" has there appeared such a documented, factual, and absorbingly interesting book about the world of natural science. Perhaps the expert will prefer the original documents from which the author has woven his tale, but for all others it would be difficult to find a better book on the unfolding of all that matters about South America—if one excludes bloody revolutions, horrid dictators, and the fight for freedom.

All but one of these great men came from families wealthy enough to indulge their interests—only Richard Spruce had to learn the rudiments of botany from his friend Sam Gibson, a Yorkshire tinsmith. This first bitter struggle with poverty dogged him all his life. After fifteen years in the jungle and the Andes he landed in England with no money and only the fame bestowed by his colleagues. La Condamine, Humboldt, and Darwin were showered with the world's honors, the latter ultimately being buried in Westminster Abbey. Spruce, who enriched the herbaria of Europe with more than ninety thousand specimens was accorded only an annual pension of fifty pounds, and an honorary degree by the Imperial German Academy. It is a tragic tale of success, defeat, disease, and an incredible fidelity to his chosen calling.

How destiny hangs as by a thread is well illustrated by the life of Darwin. He was practically fired from the medical school and then, with parental prompting, considered the Church. Soon after came the offer to go as naturalist on the *Beagle,* which, after stormy arguments with his father, he turned down. What fate was it that his father's old friend, Joseph Wedgwood, of crockery fame, should write to the Darwins just after the fateful declination had gone! He completely talked Darwin's father out of his attitude that the trip was a "wild scheme on every ground." Overjoyed, the youthful Darwin rushed to the *Beagle* and said: "I trust the place is not given away." It wasn't, but one shudders to think that if it had been there might have been no "Origin of Species," no "Voyage on the Beagle," no "Descent of Man"—for all these were germinated during his five years on the ship. They were years of privation—yes. But what of that when you are six feet two, twenty-two, and have a head bursting with ideas—not all of them scientific? It may surprise the savants to know that the author of the "Origin" wrote to his sister from Buenos Aires: "How foolish English Women are, they can neither walk nor dress. And then how ugly Miss sounds after Señorita. I am sorry for you all."

It is impossible in a brief review to notice the scientific attainments of this quartet of giants, to all of whom South America called as it still calls today to most of us. Among their adventures none is more thrilling than what happened to Mme. Godin, the Ecuadorian wife of one of La Condamine's assistants on the expedition. By some of the fates that made travel so uncertain and dangerous in the South America of 1737, Godin and his wife were at opposite ends of the Amazon. He sent a boat up from Pará and on her way to meet it she and her party of balsa-borne servants were wrecked in a rushing torrent. Those who did not drown reached the jungle shore with no food, scarcely any clothes, and no means of transport. From here, after lust and death had done their handiwork, only this frail gentlewoman was left—alone, defenseless, and with no food.

Both her father and husband credited the reports of her death. How she wandered through the jungle and ultimately reached safety is wellnigh incredible, and, like some current movies, cannot be divulged.

In a book so readable and so packed with interest it seems invidious to point out that the author is not always careful about his facts. Cinchona was well known long before La Condamine, and while Spruce sent seeds of it from Ecuador they emphatically did not produce much quinine for India, as only yesterday the Health Office at Calcutta was pleading that British Indian quinine be produced from the inferior government plantations. And several times the author uses "parasites" when it is obvious he means "epiphytes." Nor is it quite true that South America was a terra incognita until his world famous naturalists "discovered" it. He makes no mention of Pedro de Cieza de Leon, of Gracilasso de la Vega's "Royal Commentaries" on the Incas, both published at least 150 years before any of his explorers reached South America. And Herman van der Heyden was writing on the virtues of cinchona at Antwerp in 1643. The book, scarcely at all scarred by these slips, is thoroughly indexed, of absorbing interest, and a *must* for all who cherish more than a tourist's interest in South America.

The Mountain Lion

By Starr Nelson

FIRST was the pheasant, in the fringe of ferns glowing
Like live topaz. Her hands, innocent of blood
And gems, stroked the great bird. A little farther in the wood,
In a curve of the amber Nubanusit flowing
Over velvet pine-cones, the deer. Blowing
The river from his nostrils, like a deer in bronze he stood,
With onyx eyes, while her hands caressed his head.
"The beasts," she smiled to herself, "have a way of knowing
The unstained."

She was deep in the forest when she saw the mane
Of the mountain-lion burning the dry river-bed.
In the roaring flame wild eyes were one dilating sun.
Oh, in whose golden breast was that painful pain?
She saw blood vivid on her hand as she turned to run,—
But whether her own or the lion's, she couldn't have said.

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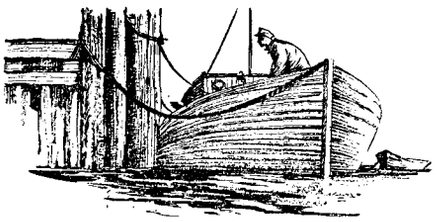
U. S. and Far East Diplomacy

AMERICA'S FAR EASTERN POLICY. By T. A. Bisson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1945. 230 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT OKIN



PEARL HARBOR put a period to an era of United States Far Eastern relations. When this war is over a new era will begin. The dynamo of Japanese expansion will be stilled. China will be an independent nation strong enough to keep its own door open. In the southeast there will be inevitable stirrings of colonial peoples. In the north there will be the still uncertain course of Soviet policy. Presumably a United Nations organization will be available as an instrument of combined action. And the United States, as never before, will be concerned with and will be aware of its stake in this vital area of world power.

Onto this horizon Mr. Bisson, an authority with twenty years' experience in the East, has cast a studious, if at times cautious, light. His work was commissioned by the Institute of Pacific Relations of which he is a Research Associate, and it is part of the Institute's Inquiry Series on problems arising from the war. Most of the book is concerned with the past—the background of American Far Eastern policy and a detailed analysis of the decade before the war. At the beginning and at the end the author probes somewhat gingerly into the future that will face the diplomats when the Generals are through.

In the ten years before the war when "Japanese aggression constituted the dynamic factor in Far Eastern developments" the record is not a happy one. Writes Mr. Bisson:

> For the Western powers, including the United States, the decade symbolized the policy of concession and compromise, of unwillingness to give adequate support to China's defensive struggle, of long continued arming of the Japanese aggressor through failure to impose substantial restrictions on trade—in short, the era of appeasement. . . . It was not recognized in time that unsupported diplomatic protests which kept the record clear but necessarily went unheeded . . . laid the groundwork for a Pacific war. . . .

The blame, he says, was twofold. Within the United States was a strong sector of opinion that held to the delusion that security would come with inaction and isolation. But on the other hand "no consistent lead was offered that section of the American public which was aware of the need to take adequate and timely preventive measures if the march on aggression was to be halted."

For the future he sees the keystone as peace maintained throughout the world by collective action. Once that is accomplished the United States will face a number of new problems without the old guideposts of the past. Japan will be stripped of its conquests and become a third-rate power. How will she be treated? In Mr. Bisson's opinion the key lies in raising the Japanese standard of living by breaking up the monopoly of the big industrial families and of the big landlords. He finds the Emperor system a menace which should not be retained and he would have the United States make no attempt to prop it up when the inevitable independent people's movements spring from defeat.

China will emerge from the war as a leader of eastern Asia. Its major problem will be reconstruction but here Mr. Bisson warns that no attempt should be made to industrialize under forced pressure. Rather, new industry should be related to the rural districts and "geared into a reform of agrarian conditions." In Southeast Asia some joint policy should be enunciated by Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, and France looking to eventual freedom and self-government. In the Philippines the United States should guarantee the stability of the Islands' economy during the transition to independence.

The one notable omission in Mr. Bisson's study is Russia. There can be little doubt that Russia's policy in Asia—whatever it may be—will have an effect on ours. However, he comments only that "broadly based American-Soviet coöperation on all issues affecting the Pacific area" will be needed after the war.

This is by no means a popular book but it is an important and valuable one. It is scholarly, factual, serious, and authoritative and for anyone with an interest in the field well-nigh an imperative. Included are sixty-five pages of relevant documents.

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MIDWEST BOOK NEWS

Books *ARE* Alive

By Velma Benedict
Manager Book Section
The Fair
State and Adams Streets
Chicago
Guest Columnist

Today a new reading public is being created. The vast numbers of people to whom buying and reading good books is a newly-discovered pleasure will not cease, once their desire is stimulated. They will continue buying and reading books on an ever-increasing quantity-quality scale.

We find that there is a great surge of interest in all children's books. In spite of the shortage of paper and materials, never have children's books been more beautiful and of greater variety. In this respect, "Tell Me About God" and "Small Rain" are outstanding examples of aesthetic beauty and general tone of presentation.

There is growing interest in books on post-war subjects, such as post-war industry, business, agriculture and especially post-war homes and building. This new interest will result in more and more outstanding books on these subjects and the keen post-war competition expected in the book field should intensify the business of the alert bookseller.

It is thrilling indeed to be in a position to feel and note this quickening pulse of book trends as a measure of the tempo of modern thinking and progressiveness. Yes, Books *ARE* Alive.

* * *

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the Phoenix Nest

IT is really the closed season for limericks, but Kitty Pyle sends me one which isn't so bad, and, as she says, "Adam was a literary figure too, wasn't he?

There once was a fellow named Adam
Who hid from the Lord when he bade 'im
Come out and confess
To two apples less.
When captured, said Adam, "'Twas Madam!"

That has been characteristic of my sex ever since.

Alfred H. P. Sayers of New York likes the name of The Runcible Cat Press. The owners and operators are Florence Little, a children's librarian in the Alameda County Library at Oakland, California, and Annetta Carter, who is in the Botany Department of the University of California. These ladies give the data on their press as weight: 400 pounds, model: side-wheeler, printing types: several nearly complete alphabets. They intend chiefly to print birth announcements for their friends, and other things.

Alcoholics are Sick People

ROBERT V. SELIGER, M.D.

Assistant Visiting Psychiatrist

Johns Hopkins Hospital

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Florence Waterman of Beacon Street, Boston—in summer Folly Cove, Cape Ann—says it has always bothered her that Edwin Arlington Robinson, in the poem we recently printed in The Phoenix Nest, seemed (or pretended) not to know that Homer could tell him who Ucalegon was. She quotes:

> And they that were with Priam and Panthoos—Ucalegon withal and Antenor, twain sages, being elders of the people, sat at the Skaian gates. These had now ceased from battle for old age, yet were they right good orators. . . . Now when they saw Helen coming to the tower, they softly spake winged words one to the other: "Small blame is it that Trojans and well-greaved Achaians should for such a woman long time suffer hardships; marvellously like is she to the immortal goddesses to look upon. . . . (Iliad III, 140-160) tr. Lang, Leaf, Myers.

"It was, of course, these then familiar lines," Miss Waterman says, "that inspired Vergil to make memorable the burning of Ucalegon's house on that fateful night at Troy."

Carroll Van Court of Los Angeles is quite versatile, as he writes brief commercial verse used by the Gallenkamp Shoe Company, which runs in two Los Angeles papers every week. He has sold many poems. His father, De Witt Van Court, was the world's greatest boxing instructor, and "the man who taught Jeffries." Mr. Van Court himself taught boxing for six years and handball for thirty-four years. He says he thinks his thorough knowledge of music gave him his sense of rhythm. Some of his friends in the past have been Charles E. Van Loan, George Sterling, H. H. Van Dine, and Jack London. For twenty years also he was a proofreader on the *Los Angeles Times*. He once had a toy theatre that could be made for about two dollars, and he tells me about it as follows:

> When I was five years old, they gave me one for Xmas, and I had it for many years, until it wore out and fell to pieces. It was made of a flat board, with grooves in it, running across the stage. The actors were of cardboard, fastened to strings, which I pulled across. The scenes were stuck in slots, which ran about three or four inches into the sides, and a large card in the back had the scene of the play on it. A cute little roller curtain on strings went up and down, in front, and a painted or colored archlike frame was around the front of the curtain. I had a little pamphlet of each play, with the words in it, and the changes of scenes, and, when I could get no girl to play the feminine parts, I played the whole thing, myself, sitting behind the little playhouse, and reading the words, changing my voice, as required.
>
> I had five plays: "Robinson Crusoe," "Beauty and the Beast," "Cinderella," "Bluebeard," and "Jack the Giant Killer."
>
> Then, when I was about fifteen years old, I discovered Jules Verne, and read all he wrote, with wild enthusiasm. I next dramatized his book, "Michael Strogoff," ending the play with his famous words, "For God, my country, and my mother," as he says in the book. My father, who was handy with carpenter's tools, made the scenery for me, and a larger stage, when my first one wore out, and I amused my little cousins and their friends with these plays, for many years.
>
> I kept the little toy theatre until it finally fell apart, and I couldn't buy another one, anywhere. I often wonder why they don't make them, again, like those I had, as nothing on the market today seems to me to be adequate for such thrilling entertainment for kids.

Lewis Howard of this city thus pays tribute to the late F. Scott Fitzgerald:

You, who recorded the wasting indiscretions
Of the Twenties' youth;
Who observed, with enduring eye, its sad
Inexorable Transiency;
Who considered the extortionate beauty of
Young women and let them break your heart;
Who detected, with uncanny sense and stunning
Word, things known that humans can't articulate;
Who sought the drinker's cushion from life's lethal
Stabs and wrenching disillusion;
Who lie before me, stilled at last, unsung, sheltered
From the Hollywood rain, rest well—
For they shall know you in a distant day.

In the recapture of Manila the heroic Filipinos have played no small part. Miss Mary Ann O'Brian of this city, who sends in the following poem, explains that "A Pinoy is a first-generation Filipino, a citizen of the Phillipines, a national of this country without the right to become a citizen. In the Western states, where most of the Pinoys live, they are classed as Orientals, and, as such, barred by law from marrying Caucasians."

PINOY LOVE SONG

Mountains of sorrow weigh on my heart
Where grows without blossom the exiled vine,
Grafted plant of the shadow and half-light,

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Stalk of the marsh embittered by
salt.

Softly I feel the light wind of love
Moving among its remembered
leaves.
Gently its tendrils stir in my soul.

Full the flower that will not bloom
On white-pruned stems that tears
have fed.
Strong the seed that will not ripen
And fall to lie in sweeter soil.
Fragrant is that brilliant bud
That will not come from salted
ground.

MARY ANN O'BRIAN.

The Negro Digest is a going concern, with John H. Johnson as Editor and Publisher. It is brought out at South State Street, Chicago. The January number contains a fine poem written expressly for it by John Beecher, who is a descendant of Harriet Beecher Stowe and by way of being one of the most eloquent younger poets of our time. Not so long ago *The New Republic* carried an unusually striking tribute of his to the late Senator George Norris.

Earle Walbridge answers on the Brewer matter:

> The Dictionary of National Biography (vol. 6, 1886) begins its account
>
> BREWER, ANTONY (*fl.* 1655)
>
> and calls him Antony throughout, though noting that "The Lovesick King" had Anth. Brewer on the title-page. True enough, the early volumes of the DNB had numerous errors, but I didn't find any note on Brewer in the later lists of Errata. As a matter of fact, I was more intent on writing an amusing paragraph on Brewer (or trying to) than on doing a full-blown piece of research.

Having recently had a ballad of mine criticized as too flatly factual, I was pleased to recall a verse from "The Ancient Mariner":

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he—
And he shone bright, and on the
right
Went down into the sea.

Very neat, that! Once, also, a parodist named Rudyard Kipling took William Wordsworth to task as follows

I had a coach with horses four,
Three white (though one was black),
And on they went the common o'er,
Nor swiftness did they lack.

But, of course, the best Wordsworth parody of all was in Horace Smith's "The Baby's Début," which contains the following immortal lines about horses:

I saw them go: one horse was blind,
The tails of both hung down behind,
Their shoes were on their feet.

Well, well, anon, anon!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

NEW NOVELISTS OF 1944

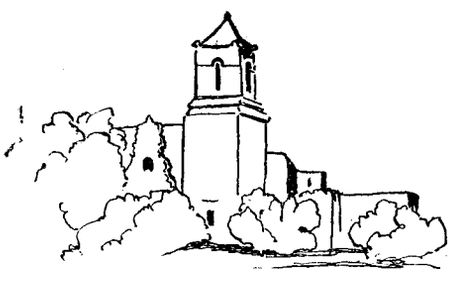
(*Continued from page* 14)

Nathan," said the *Catholic World*. Not a prizewinner, but a Harper "find," which meant special promotion by the publisher for a new author, was "Mom Counted Six," by Mac Gardner.

Most prominent of the other first novels of the year was "Boston Adventure," by Jean Stafford (Harcourt, Brace). It was selected for distribution by the People's Book Club. A brilliantly written first novel, was Lilian Van Ness's "Again in October" (Doubleday, Doran). "Colcorton," by Edith Pope (Scribner), received excellent reviews. Said William Du Bois in *The New York Times*: "Another Floridian novelist quietly but definitely enters the ranks of the majors."

A Canadian political reporter, Bruce Hutchison, wrote "The Hollow Men" (Coward-McCann), a story of a man's quest for the meaning of life in the midst of this world's unrest. "A first novel for discerning readers," wrote Virginia Kirkus of Dorothy Langley's whimsical "Wait for Mrs. Willard" (Simon & Schuster). "We Ride a White Donkey" (Harcourt, Brace) consisted of George Panetta's hilarious stories of a poor Italian family on New York's East Side. Honor Croome, an English evacuée of 1940, told the story of four Englishwomen and their children, lodged together in a big house near Boston, in "O Western Wind" (Putnam). "The Cauliflower Heart," by Marian G. Champagne (Dial Press), followed the lives of a group of girls who met while attending Smith College in the late 1930's. Eleanor A. Nash, sister of Ogden Nash, drew a portrait of a modern business man in "Footnote to Life" (Appleton-Century). "She has some of her brother's gift for swift and satiric delineation," said Thomas Sugrue in *The New York Times*. "This Is Kate," by Margaret Hard (Holt), was the story of a Protestant child in a Canadian Catholic convent.

Obviously, among the 905 new fiction titles produced in America in 1944, there were other first novels besides those discussed here. Critical comment, outstanding sales, or other distinction, were the bases for inclusion in this article, which, of necessity, had to make some limitations.



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(*Continued from page* 41)

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The Crostics Club

FROM time to time some puzzler writes that she or he has done all the *SRL* DCs since the beginning. These letters are scattered in my files. So it occurs to me that, just as the department stores have their twenty-five years' service groups, so we might keep for the record those who have been with us since the first over ten years ago—not necessarily those who have managed to solve in that time *all* the DCs. I'd like to publish such a scroll in this column. If you are one of that class, will you drop me a postal to say so?

For the benefit of inquiring DCers, and to save myself the trouble of replies, I report that in the *Publishers' Weekly Spring Announcements* is listed Series 17 as of March. Meanwhile the publishers of our DCs are in an enlivening promotion campaign for "Introduction to Double-Crostics," and if you want a good chuckle just note the uncommonly jolly ad for it in *The New York Times* of Feb. 2, last page, second section.

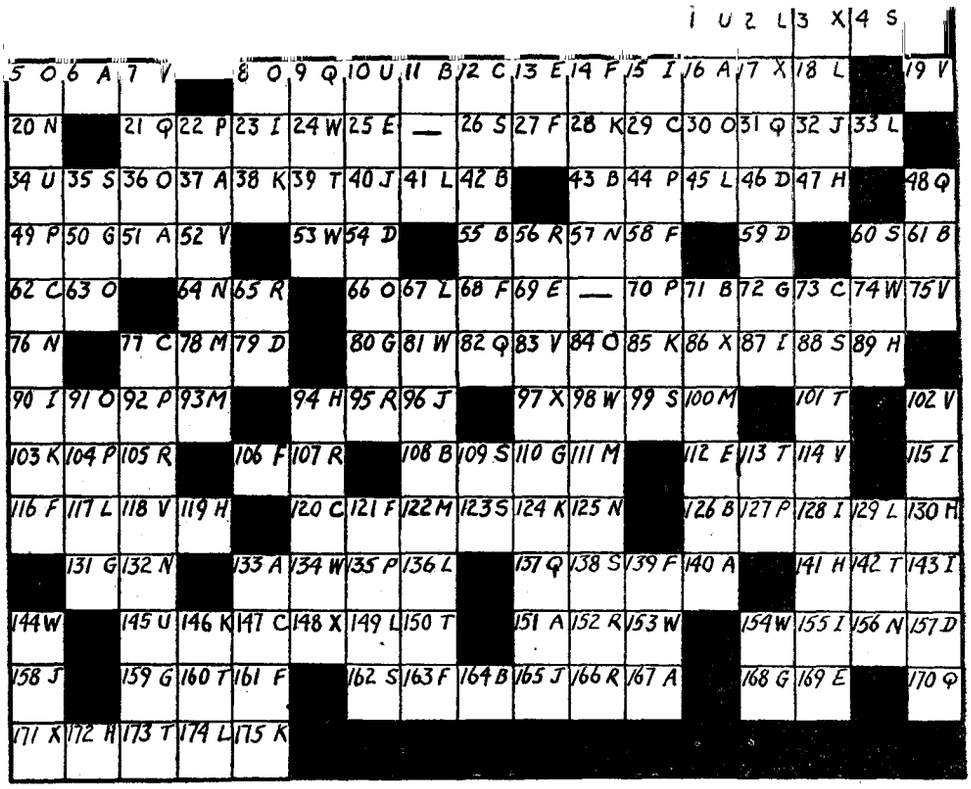
If seafaring terms crop up hereafter in our DCs, you may attribute the inclusion to my possession of Joanna C. Colcord's "Sea Language Comes Ashore." I know that I have a treat in store for me, especially as my copy comes straight from the author.

One of the unplaced and unsigned letters I dislike calls my attention to a recent error in the quotation of DC 557, and, as the writer bolsters up her statement by authority, she must be right and I in duty bound must pass it on to you. It was caused, no doubt, by my inability to read my own scrawl months after it had been written on my visit to Toronto in September. But the error in my opinion truly adds to the quaintness of the whole, as, I recall, I thought the sentiment did when I used it! The puzzler writes that the word *dead* should have been *deed* in the line "And who is there dare the *dead* malign?" It follows, you recall, the report that the good curé killed his own chicken for the fricassee he loved.

A few years ago in one of Ogden Nash's collections was a short, characteristic summing-up about the Japanese. I marvelled at its inclusion when diplomacy called for such finesse in our dealings with that nation. So few seem familiar with it when I quote it that I want to hand it on to you though I haven't the poem handy for verification. It runs like this:

How courteous is the Japanese!
He always says, "Excuse it please."
He climbs into his neighbor's garden
And grins and says, "I beg your pardon."
He bows and grins a friendly grin
And invites his hungry neighbors in;
He grins and bows a friendly bow:
"So sorry, this my garden now."

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 569

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 34 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Sweetheart, esp. in 16th cent. pastoral poems.

B. Mt. in Worcester Co., Mass., 2108 ft. high.

C. Two Federal defeats in the Civil War (July, '61; Aug., '62).

D. Medieval stringed violinlike instrument (Music).

E. Ancient and modern Greek coins (1/20 drachma).

F. Leading variety of yellow banana (Hort.)

G. Toward the elbow (Anat.)

H. Transcendentalism (Hist.; with "The").

I. In order; straight (Colloq.; comp.)

J. Archbishop of Mainz in 10th cent., eaten by rats for cruelty to poor.

K. False woman in title of "Idylls of the King."

L. Fifty-fifty (Slang U. S.; 2 wds.)

M. Full of flavor; pleasant.

N. Dog of a breed named from resemblance to Greek mythological monster.

O. Dorothea's second husband ("Middlemarch").

P. Little by little; gradually.

Q. Pertaining to school of philosophy founded by Zeno, 308 B.C.

R. Change course so as to sail closer to the wind, etc. (Naut.; 2 wds.)

S. Satirical romance by Rabelais and character therein.

T. Fatlike substance necessary to cell-growth (considered to be vitamin A).

U. Scraps; bits.

V. Starched front of a man's shirt; metal breastplate in medieval armor.

W. Flaxen; of the color flax (Comp.)

X. Fix fast; implant deep.

WORDS

51 16 133 167 37 151 140 6

126 61 11 55 164 42 71 43 108

77 147 120 62 29 12 73

46 54 157 79 59

169 112 25 69 13

58 163 106 14 27 121 139 116 161 68

159 50 110 131 168 72 80

172 119 141 94 47 89 130

115 87 143 15 23 155 90 128

158 32 165 96 40

28 85 38 103 146 175 124

67 2 45 33 18 136 117 129 149 174 41

122 78 93 111 100

76 125 156 20 132 64 57

36 5 8 30 84 63 91 66

127 22 92 44 70 49 135 104

82 48 137 9 31 21 170

166 56 152 105 95 65 107

60 26 138 162 109 123 4 88 35 99

142 160 173 113 150 39 101

1 34 145 10

102 7 83 52 114 118 19 75

24 74 98 53 154 134 81 153 144

3 17 86 97 171 148

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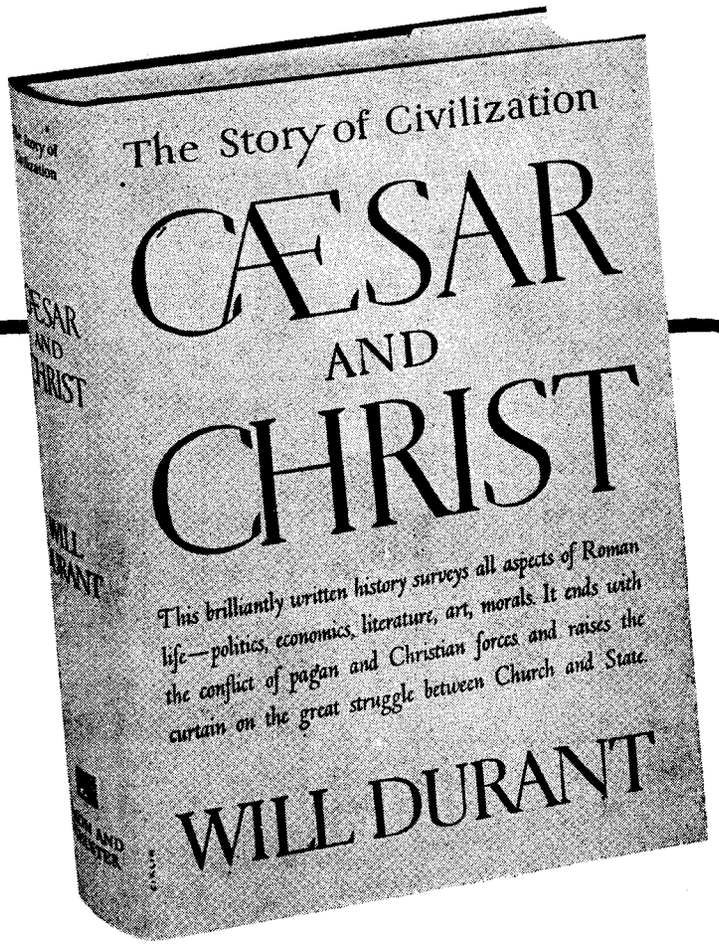
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